ANDREW HARKER

Loyalty and Dissidence in Roman Egypt

The Case of the Acta Alexandrinorum

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LOYALTY AND DISSIDENCE IN ROMAN EGYPT

The *Acta Alexandrinorum* are a fascinating collection of texts, dealing with relations between the Alexandrians and the Roman emperors in the first century AD. This was a turbulent time in the life of the capital city of the new province of Egypt, not least because of tensions between the Greek and Jewish sections of the population. Dr Harker has written the first in-depth study of these texts since their first edition half a century ago, and examines them in the context of other similar contemporary literary forms, both from Roman Egypt and the wider Roman Empire. The study of the *Acta Alexandrinorum* literature, which, as this book demonstrates, was genuinely popular in Roman Egypt, offers a different and more complex perspective on provincial mentalities towards imperial Rome than that offered by the study of the mainstream elite literature of the Principate. It will be of interest to classicists and ancient historians, but also to those interested in Jewish and New Testament studies.

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The Case of the Acta Alexandrinorum

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Note on abbreviations

Literary sources and journals are cited by their standard abbreviations, as found, for example, in *OCD*[3]. Other frequently used abbreviations are:

Acta	Musurillo, *Acta Alexandrinorum*, Lipsiae, 1961.
AFA	*Acts of the Arval Brethren*.
Agr.	Philo, *De agricultura*.
Alex.	Philo, *Alexander*.
APM	Musurillo, *The Acts of the Pagan Martyrs*, Oxford, 1954.
Dio	Dio Cassius.
GC	J. H. Oliver, *Greek Constitutions*, Philadelphia, 1989.
L.A.	Philo, *Legum allegoriarum*.
Pack[2]	R. Pack, *The Greek and Latin Literary Papyri from Greco-Roman Egypt*, 2nd edn, Ann Arbor, 1965.
Prob.	Philo, *Quod omnis probus liber*.
Reg. et imp. apophth.	Plutarch, *Regum et imperatorum apophthegmata*.
Spec.	Philo, *De specialibus legibus*.

All papyri are cited according to the latest version of the *Checklist of Editions of Greek and Latin Papyri, Ostraca and Tablets* published on the World Wide Web. I have used the abbreviation *CPJ* rather than the *Checklist's C.Pap.Jud*. for the sake of convenience.

All citations of Eusebius, *Chron. Hieron.* are from the edition of Helm 1984. All citations from Byzantine sources (Georgius Syncellus, John Malalas, the *Chronicon Paschale*) are from the *Corpus Scriptorum Historiae Byzantinae* series.

CHAPTER I

Introduction

THE *ACTA ALEXANDRINORUM* PROPER AND *ACTA* RELATED LITERATURE

The vast majority of the many thousands of papyri that have been recovered from ancient Egypt are documents, but roughly a tenth are literary and 'sub-literary' texts. Some of these contain works which had survived anyway, such as those of Homer and Thucydides, but others have yielded lost pieces of ancient literature, e.g. Aristotle's *Constitution of Athens*. Among this latter group are a series of texts that have become known as the *Acta Alexandrinorum* or the *Acts of the Pagan Martyrs*.

The *Acta Alexandrinorum* tell the stories of the heroic deaths of Alexandrian Greek nobles. The favoured form of these stories is a record of their trial scene in the imperial court, usually presented as the official minutes (*acta*), with only a small amount of narrative.[1] The *Acta Alexandrinorum* recycle the same archetypal story where a group of Alexandrian ambassadors travel to Rome and, on arrival, face a hostile emperor who has allied himself with their enemies, usually the Jewish community resident in Alexandria. A bitter exchange of words follows between the emperor and the Alexandrians, who bravely defy the emperor on behalf of their beloved fatherland, and scornfully attribute his hostility towards them to his lack of high birth and culture. The stories usually end with at least some of the Alexandrians being led away to execution, recalling as they depart the long and glorious line of Alexandrians who have died before them in a similar fashion. The stories, which feature most of the emperors from Augustus to Caracalla, are written to evoke sympathy towards the Alexandrians and insist that they die as the innocent victims of imperial bias and cruelty. Some of the stories have an historical, and perhaps a documentary, basis and use historical personages, but all surviving examples have been fictionalised to some extent.

[1] The form of the stories has inspired the convenient modern title *Acta Alexandrinorum* ('the official minutes of the Alexandrians').

While the term *Acta Alexandrinorum* should be reserved solely for those texts which recycle this same essential story line (hereafter the *Acta Alexandrinorum* proper), in practice it has been extended to cover numerous other pieces of related 'literary' and 'documentary' texts. Thus the categorisation has been used of imperial letters to Alexandria, stories of secret meetings between Alexandrians and Roman prefects, rhetorical speeches delivered before emperors, accounts of imperial receptions in Alexandria, and accounts of Alexandrians prosecuting Roman prefects. These texts do not conform to my definition of the *Acta Alexandrinorum*, but are often extremely similar in theme and content. For convenience, I will refer to them as the '*Acta* related literature'. I use the term '*Acta Alexandrinorum* literature' to cover both categories.

The *Acta Alexandrinorum* literature was read in Egypt from the Augustan period to the mid-third century AD. Most of the extant texts come from the late second–early third century AD, but this is unsurprising, as most surviving papyri come from this period anyway.[2] Nonetheless, the fact that the older stories were being rewritten in this period and new stories were being composed would suggest that the literature was particularly popular in the Severan period, before disappearing entirely. It had a broad appeal in Egypt. Examples of the *Acta Alexandrinorum* literature have been found both in urban centres, like Oxyrhynchus, Hermopolis Magna and Panopolis, and in villages, such as Karanis and Tebtunis, both of which are situated in the Fayum. The majority of the texts come from Oxyrhynchus and the villages of the Fayum. This is to be expected, however, as these sites have yielded the most papyri. Given this impressive geographical spread, it is reasonable to suppose that the *Acta Alexandrinorum* literature was known and read in Egypt wherever people could read.

THE PAPYRI OF THE *ACTA ALEXANDRINORUM*

The study of a literature preserved solely on papyrus, the ancient equivalent of paper, carries several intrinsic difficulties. Only a tiny proportion of the millions of papyri circulating in antiquity has survived. The surviving texts have been preserved in an uneven pattern and predominantly come from Egypt and the Near East where the climates are dry and anhydrous. Most of the papyri from Egypt come from relatively few sites, such as Behnesa, where the ancient metropolis of Oxyrhynchus once stood, and from the villages of the Fayum. Consequently texts from the coastal city of Alexandria, where the *Acta Alexandrinorum* literature presumably thrived, have not survived.

[2] Duncan-Jones 1990: 67–73; Habermann 1998: 144–60 (especially 157).

Not one example of the *Acta Alexandrinorum* literature has survived in its original entirety. At best several fragmentary columns survive; at worst, only a few lines or words, which serve only to show that the text was probably a piece of the *Acta Alexandrinorum* literature.[3] Few papyri have survived the last two millennia undamaged. Most of the Oxyrhynchus papyri were recovered from rubbish heaps, which suggests that they were already damaged prior to being discarded. In the nineteenth century local inhabitants, realising the value of papyri, conducted their own excavations and dealers sometimes tore papyri in half in order to increase their profits. This practice has meant that fragments of the same text now belong to different collections, which hampers identification and study.[4]

While some examples of the *Acta Alexandrinorum* literature were written onto new pieces of papyrus by practised scribes, others were scrawled onto the back of already used scraps of papyrus. Both can be difficult to read. Papyri are now usually published with a photograph, a transcription, a translation and a discussion, but this was not always the case. There are many examples, particularly in the case of older texts, where readings have been modified after further study.[5]

The poor physical state of the papyri leads to problems of reading and interpretation. Scholars supplement gaps in the texts, where possible. However, while formulaic, documentary texts can be restored with confidence, literary texts cannot. Over the last century many supplements have been proposed. In 1939 von Premerstein created over a hundred lines of continuous text from the badly damaged *P.Giss.Univ.* v 46, in which not a single line of text had survived. The subsequent discovery of a new fragment of the same text, *P.Yale* inv. 1385, proved conclusively that von Premerstein's restored version was deeply flawed.[6] Due to the poor physical state of the *Acta Alexandrinorum* literature, supplements have to be used. My method has been to use only the generally accepted supplements in this study. But I have tried to avoid being overly cautious. In some cases the gist of the text seems retrievable from the remaining words, and I have discussed some potential supplements in chapters 2, 3 and Appendices I and III.

Literary papyri can only be dated by the style of their handwriting unless there are internal indicators. However, because handwriting generally remains the same for a lifetime, there is a wide margin of error for the

[3] E.g. eight and seven columns respectively in *CPJ* II 158a and 159; a few lines in *CPJ* III 456.

[4] E.g. *CPJ* II 156a (in Germany until lost) and 156d (Egypt); *CPJ* II 158a i–iii, vi–viii (Paris) and 158a iv–v (London); *P.Giss.Univ.* v 46 (Germany) and *P.Yale* inv. 1385 (USA); *CPJ* II 159a (USA) and 159b (London).

[5] New readings are discussed in Appendix I.

[6] Musurillo and Parássoglou 1974: 1–7; see the criticisms of Premerstein's restoration in Bell 1940: 48–9; Musurillo 1954: 8–17 and subsequent editions have been more reserved.

dating of the texts. I have followed the dates proposed by the editors. Even among the *Acta Alexandrinorum* literature, however, there are examples of texts that have been redated after further study.[7]

The exact provenance of many pieces of the *Acta Alexandrinorum* literature is unknown. Even when this is known it often reveals little about who owned the text. It was not until the controlled excavations at Karanis in the 1920s that an example of the *Acta Alexandrinorum* literature could be placed into its rightful context. This was a fragment that belonged to a Hellenised Egyptian named Socrates, whose archive reveals a unique insight into the personality of a man who read this type of literature.[8]

Any attempt to produce a comprehensive study of the *Acta Alexandrinorum* literature will soon be out of date. There are many papyri awaiting publication and new excavations, despite the rising water table, are yielding more. Further examples will continue to be discovered. While Musurillo's second edition of the *Acta Alexandrinorum* was in press (1961), for example, four new fragments were either identified or published,[9] and many new fragments have been found since then.

ALEXANDRIA AND ROME

By the time that Octavian conquered and annexed Egypt in 30 BC, Rome had long been involved in Alexandrian politics. Direct political contact had begun in 273 BC, when Ptolemy II received a formal grant of Roman *amicitia*. During the second century BC Rome began to interfere actively in Alexandrian and Egyptian affairs, and in the first century BC the Romans increasingly intervened in internal dynastic disputes between the Ptolemies. In 58 BC for example the Roman Senate reinstated Ptolemy XII Auletes against the wishes of the Alexandrians, who had expelled him.[10] The encroaching influence of Rome became all the more obvious when regions of the Ptolemaic empire were annexed by the Romans and when Auletes left Egypt to Ptolemy XIII and Cleopatra VII, naming the Roman people as witnesses. Contemporary sources reveal the hostility towards Rome felt by the Alexandrians as the shadow of Rome fell across the last Hellenistic kingdom.[11]

[7] E.g. *BGU* II 588, assigned in the *editio princeps* to the first century AD, was reassigned to the second or third century AD in Wilcken 1909: 825.

[8] See pp. 112–19.

[9] *P.Oxy.* XXII 2339; *P.Oxy.* XXV 2435 recto and verso; *SB* VI 9528.

[10] See Siani-Davies 1997: 306–40.

[11] E.g. Diod. Sic. 1.83.8 on the lynching of a Roman dignitary in 59 BC; Caesar *B Civ.* 3.110, Val. Max. 4.1.15 on the execution of the two sons of the Syrian governor Bibulus.

Octavian treated Alexandria with great respect, despite the support that the city had given to his rival Mark Antony. His rhetorical claim that he had spared Alexandria on account of its founder, Alexander the Great, the god Serapis and the intervention of his friend, Areius of Alexandria, belies the fact that he enhanced the city's status, instituting and upholding many privileges.[12] Alexandria became the seat of the Roman government in Egypt and was known as 'Alexandria *ad* Aegypto' rather than '*in* Aegypto', emphasising its status. Alexandrian territory was not subject to taxation, and territory owned by Alexandrians in the Egyptian *chora* enjoyed a lower rate of taxation. Alexandrian citizens were exempt from the poll tax (*laographia*) which was levelled on all other inhabitants of the province and from liturgical duties in the *chora*. The emperors upheld the importance and exclusivity of Alexandrian citizenship. A natural reading of Pliny's letters to Trajan reveals that only Alexandrian citizens, not Egyptians, could receive Roman citizenship.[13] Octavian treated Alexandria more like an allied city rather than a conquered one, ensuring that Alexandrian citizenship was important for status and cultural identity and was the goal of ambitious, Hellenised Egyptians. Many individual Alexandrians prospered under Roman rule and because of it, and many received the Roman citizenship or enjoyed a career in the imperial service. Alexandrians such as Tiberius Claudius Balbillus, Tiberius Julius Alexander and Appian (the author) held important positions in the imperial court and administration, although no Alexandrians were senators at Rome before the time of Caracalla. The Roman emperors were not Greek but they proved to be no worse rulers than the Ptolemies had been.[14]

Nevertheless, the hostility which some Alexandrians felt towards the Romans in the Ptolemaic period was probably intensified by the abuses inflicted on the city by corrupt Roman administrators during the Principate. Another major source of discontent was that Alexandria was also not allowed to convene a city council. Although Dio reports that Octavian 'ordered the Alexandrians to conduct their government without councillors', Octavian probably banned the reconvention of the council, rather than abolishing an existing council.[15] The absence of the institution through which all other contemporary Greek *poleis* were run may have dented

[12] Dio 51.16.3–4; Plut. *Reg. et imp. apophth*. 207.3; *Ant*. 80.
[13] Plin. *Ep*. 10.5–7, 10. Cf. Delia 1991: 39–45.
[14] On Roman Alexandria see Rowlandson and Harker 2004: 79–111.
[15] Dio 51.17.2; Bowman and Rathbone 1992: 108–9, 114 n. 35. The Alexandrian council is not attested in the first century BC and is likely to have been disbanded by Ptolemy VIII Euergetes in the 120s BC after rioting in the city.

Alexandrian pride, but the city still administered her own affairs. The council of elders (*gerousia*) apparently numbering 173 and the gymnasium, which were social and honorific institutions, took on an overtly political role in the absence of a *boule*.[16]

The Roman occupation of Alexandria aggravated the existing social tensions within the city. Although the Alexandrians petitioned various emperors during the Principate to reinstate their council, permission to do so was not granted until the Severan period.[17] Many Alexandrians believed that a council would allow them to exercise a degree of control over the factional infighting between rival families, through the use of peer pressure. It would also prevent the most influential families from manipulating prefects into allowing them to monopolise offices, giving a wider access to the important magistracies and limiting the need for Roman intervention in civic affairs. The Romans however considered that a council would instead encourage further feuding and public disorder.[18] This inevitably heightened the tensions within the city, which were already strained due to the long history of poor relations between the Greeks and the large Jewish community resident in Alexandria.[19]

Alexandrian discontent manifested itself in the form of mob violence and rioting, and the populace was frequently stirred into action by nationalistic politicians who reminded the Alexandrians of their traditional enmity with Rome and the Jews.[20] The Alexandrian populace had acquired a reputation for being disorderly and unruly subjects during the Ptolemaic period.[21] The Alexandrians also acquired a reputation for mocking their rulers and were famed for the unflattering epithets that they bestowed upon them.[22] The Alexandrian mob was probably no worse than those of other major cities, although the size and importance of Alexandria ensures that any unsavoury incidents there are magnified.

The history of Roman Alexandria is littered with incidents of violence and uprisings within the city. The most serious of these involved fighting between the Alexandrian Greeks and Jews. Violence is attested in AD 38 and 41.[23] The Jews revolted three times against the Roman Empire, in AD 66–70,

[16] El-Abbadi 1964: 164–9.

[17] *CPJ* II 150, 153 (Claudius); Suda s.v. Aelius Sarapion stating that Hadrian was presented with a work entitled *On the Alexandrian Boule* suggests that he was also petitioned.

[18] Bowman and Rathbone 1992: 118–19.

[19] See pp. 212–20 on the background to the Graeco-Jewish dispute in Alexandria.

[20] Dio Chrysostom in his *Oration to Alexandria* emphasises the moral degeneracy of the mob. See Barry 1993: 82–103.

[21] E.g. in 203–202 BC a mob lynched the murderers of Queen Arsinoe (Polyb. 15.30–3); in 80 BC Ptolemy X, who had been installed as king by the Roman general Sulla and then subsequently murdered his co-ruler/wife Berenice, was dragged out of the gymnasium and assassinated.

[22] Dio 39.58.1–2; Seneca *Dial.* 12.19.6.

[23] See pp. 10–24.

115–17, 132–5, and the Alexandrian Jews were involved in the first two of these.[24] The Alexandrian Jews sustained heavy casualties in AD 115–17, but were not wiped out unlike other Jewish communities in the *chora*.[25] Further Graeco-Jewish violence occurred in the early years of Hadrian's reign.[26] Roman military losses in Hadrianic Alexandria may be connected to this violence.[27] Rioting is attested in AD 73, which, according to Dio Chrysostom, was quelled by a Roman named Conon, possibly a textual corruption for the Flavian prefect Colon.[28] The prefect Munatius Felix was killed in an uprising shortly before AD 154.[29] Alexandria supported revolts against emperors in AD 69, 175 and throughout the third century.[30] However, these were often initiated by ambitious generals, who were only too aware of the strategic importance of the city as the port of a major grain-producing province.

THE CONTROVERSY OF THE *ACTA ALEXANDRINORUM*

For the first half of the twentieth century the *Acta Alexandrinorum* were at the heart of an intense and controversial academic debate, and held the fascination of successive generations of scholars. Since Ulrich Wilcken noticed that two papyri from collections in Paris and London were part of the same report of a meeting between an emperor, whom he believed to

[24] On AD 66–70 see Joseph. *BJ* 2.487–98. The Jewish Revolt of AD 115–17 began in Alexandria in AD 115 according to Euseb. *Hist. eccl.* 4.2.1–4 or in the last months of AD 116 according to an excerpt of Dio (68.32.1–2). Oros. *Adv. pagan.* 7.12.6–7 and 7.27.6 agree with Eusebius' account. The excerpt of Dio focuses on the progress of the revolt in Cyrenaica. The sources show high Roman casualties during the revolt in Alexandria and serious collateral damage in the city. *PSI* IX 1063 (= Fink 1971: no. 74); *P.Vindob.* L 2 (= Fink 1971: no. 34); Gilliam 1966: 91–7; Kasher 1976b: 156–8. The Nemesion was destroyed (App. *B Civ.* 2.90), the Serapeum damaged (Rowe and Rees 1956–7: 496) and the Jewish synagogue destroyed (*Suk.* 5.55b–c (trans. in Alon 1984: 404)). Cf. Euseb. *Chron.* Hadrian year 1 (p. 197): 'Hadrian rebuilt Alexandria after it was destroyed by the Jews.' On the revolt see Pucci 1981; 1989: 31–48; 1990: 227–35 and below pp. 59, 76–7, 86, 91–2, 118.

[25] See Kasher 1981: 150–7 for the effect of the revolt on the Jewish community at Oxyrhynchus.

[26] SHA *Hadr.* 12.1–2; cf. Dio 69.8.1a. (Petrus Patricus *Exc. Vat.* 108). Jewish sources concur with this; see *Gittin* 57b (trans. in Alon 1984: 402); *Seder Eliyahu Rabbah* (trans. in Alon 1984: 404). Cf. Syncellus *CSHB* 19: p. 659.

[27] *Legio* XXII *Deiotariana* may have been wiped out in the violence. The legion is last attested in Egypt in AD 119 (*BGU* I 140). Bowersock 1970: 37–47; Mor 1986: 267–78; Schwartz 1989: 101–2; Strobel 1988: 268–9. But for a different view see Keppie 1990: 54–61. Private letters written by a soldier in Alexandria may also be connected to this violence (*P.Mich.* VIII 477, 478).

[28] Euseb. *Chron.* Vespasian year 5 (p. 188). Dio Chrys. *Or.* 32.71–2. It is the general consensus that the oration was delivered in the Vespasianic period. See Jones 1973: 302–9; 1997: 249–53. For another view see Sidebottom 1992: 407–19.

[29] *BGU* II 372 (on which see Strassi 1988). Malalas *CSHB* 31: p. 280 gives a rather confused account of the rebellion. SHA *Ant. Pius* 8.11 and [Aur. Vict.] *Epit. de Caes.* 15.9 refer to the grain shortage in Rome.

[30] On Alexandria in the third century see pp. 138–9.

be Trajan, and a Jewish embassy, theories have been rapidly advanced concerning the form, authenticity and purpose of the *Acta Alexandrinorum*.[31] They have been seen as fragments of imperial records,[32] biased political pamphlets,[33] lost historical works,[34] an anti-Jewish martyr literature eulogising Alexandrian gymnasiarchs,[35] fiction based on imperial records,[36] and a populist and sensational anti-Roman nationalistic literature.[37] The last major work on the texts was by the Church historian Herbert Musurillo, who published and re-edited a collection of all known *Acta Alexandrinorum* in 1954 with some translations and a full commentary. In 1961 Musurillo's Teubner edition was published, containing some textual corrections and an additional text, but no translations or commentary. For Musurillo, the *Acta Alexandrinorum* were the product of the affronted pride of the Alexandrian aristocracy, originating in the Alexandrian clubs and gymnasium, written by the gymnasiarchal class indignant at Alexandria's humbling under Roman rule, the chief grievance being that Alexandria was not allowed a *boule*.

The *Acta Alexandrinorum* literature remains controversial and a reassessment of the literature is long overdue. I examine the origins of the literature, which I believe began as a reaction to Alexandrian embassies sent to Gaius and Claudius in the first century AD (Chapter 2). In Chapter 3 and Appendix III, I survey the surviving fragments of the core group of texts and related literature, clarifying the historical background, where possible. In Chapter 4, I examine the nature, form and purpose of the stories, compare them to other literary manifestations of dissent in Roman Egypt, and show that, rather than being a secret literature of dissent, the *Acta Alexandrinorum* literature was read by a broad readership as entertainment. In Chapter 5, I examine the literature in the context of other literary forms of 'loyalty' and 'dissent' from the wider Roman Empire.

[31] *P.Par*. 68 and *P.Lond*. I (p. 229) I; Wilcken 1892: 464–80.
[32] Wilcken 1895: 481–98. [33] Deissmann 1898: 602–6; Von Dobschütz 1904: 753.
[34] Deissmann 1898: 602 'a *historia calamitatum*'; Schulthess 1899: 1049–58.
[35] Reinach 1898: 224; the concept was extended in Bauer 1901: 29–47, who published a study of the relationship between these texts and the Christian martyr acts, coining the name by which they became known for several generations, 'Heidnische Märtyrerakten' – the 'Acts of the Pagan Martyrs'.
[36] Wilcken 1909: 783–839.
[37] Schubart 1918: 193; von Premerstein 1922: 266–316; 1923; Bell 1950: 19–42.

CHAPTER 2

The embassies to Gaius and Claudius

INTRODUCTION

The historical events of AD 38–41 feature prominently in the surviving *Acta Alexandrinorum* stories. In AD 38 there was violent rioting in Alexandria between the Greeks and Jews of the city. In the aftermath of this disturbance both sides sent embassies to Rome charged with persuading Gaius Caesar to give a ruling on the issues lying behind the dispute which was favourable to themselves and detrimental to their opponents. The Alexandrian Greeks entertained great expectations of success. Gaius was well disposed towards them and showed great respect for his great-grandfather Mark Antony, whom they had supported in the civil wars of 31–30 BC.[1] Gaius' father Germanicus had enjoyed a rapturous reception from the Greeks when he visited the city in AD 19.[2] Several of Gaius' influential advisers were Alexandrian Greeks themselves and were sympathetic towards their embassy.[3] Gaius stressed his love for the city and his desire to visit it.[4] Moreover Gaius adopted several policies later in his reign that were damaging to the Jews in the empire.[5]

However, the Alexandrian Greek embassy was not successful. Gaius was assassinated on 24 January AD 41 apparently before he could deliver a written ruling. Both sides dispatched further embassies to congratulate his successor Claudius on his accession and to obtain a decision on the unresolved matters. Again the Alexandrian Greeks had high hopes of persuading an emperor who was Mark Antony's grandson and Germanicus' brother to support them. However, Claudius refused to take sides and issued a neutral ruling which was published in Alexandria on 10 October AD 41. He also apparently executed two of the Alexandrian Greeks, Isidorus and Lampon.

These historical events prompted the circulation of 'documents' about the embassies around Egypt and the composition of literary works focusing

[1] E.g. Dio 59.20.1–2. [2] See pp. 65–6. [3] Philo *Leg.* 165–70. [4] See p. 18. [5] See p. 12.

on the exploits of the ambassadors and on what had actually happened in the imperial court. These works developed into some of the texts which we now call the *Acta Alexandrinorum*. Uniquely in this case contemporary reactions and accounts written in subsequent generations survive. There is also sufficient independent evidence to reconstruct the historical background of AD 38–41. Consequently I have been able to examine the development of the traditions about these embassies and to assess the historicity of the *Acta Alexandrinorum* stories. I will argue that the ways in which people reacted to the historical events of AD 38–41 led to the creation of the first *Acta Alexandrinorum* stories and provided a literary model which future writers of the stories would follow.

RELATIONS BETWEEN ALEXANDRIA AND ROME IN AD 38–41

I will examine here the relations between Alexandria and Rome between AD 38 and 41 and investigate the composition and purpose of the embassies to Gaius and Claudius, which feature prominently and extensively in the surviving *Acta Alexandrinorum* stories.[6]

Our main literary sources for Alexandrian history in this period emanate from two Jewish writers, Philo and Josephus. Tacitus, the principal Roman historian for the reigns of the Julio-Claudian emperors, is not extant for the reign of Gaius. Events in Alexandria appear to be beyond the scope of the other important writers for this period, Dio and Suetonius. Philo composed two surviving works on the plight of the Alexandrian Jews during the reign of Gaius. The *In Flaccum* concentrates on the role of the prefect Flaccus in the rioting in Alexandria in AD 38, and the *Legatio ad Gaium* tells the story of the Jewish embassy sent to Gaius shortly afterwards, of which Philo himself was a member. However, the embassy itself is not the main subject of the work, which focuses upon examples of Gaius' alleged mania, most notably his attempt to raise a statue of himself in the Jewish Temple in Jerusalem. Philo alludes to a third work called the 'Palinode' ('the reversal of fortune?'), which has not survived but may have continued the story of the *Legatio*.[7] The Church historian Eusebius, writing in the fourth century AD, states that Philo wrote five books on the fortunes of the Jews under Gaius, although it may be the case that several books are compressed into what we now call the *Legatio*.[8] There are several lacunae in the two extant treatises. In both extant works historical detail and accuracy is subordinate to Philo's

[6] *BKT* IX 64; *CPJ* II 150, 154, 156a, b, c, and d; *P.Giss.Lit.* 4.7; *P.Oxy.* XLII 3021. See App. I for full details of these texts. *P.Oxy.* IV 683 (see App. III) may also be related.

[7] Philo *Leg.* 373; Smallwood 1961: 324–5.

[8] Euseb. *Hist. eccl.* 2.5.1; Smallwood 1961: 36–43.

aim of demonstrating divine providence by showing what happened to those who persecuted the Jews. Josephus wrote a generation later, in the Flavian period. He comments briefly upon the period in his two historical works, the *Jewish Antiquities* and the *Jewish War*. He also wrote an apologetic treatise, the *Contra Apionem*, in response to anti-Jewish statements made by Greek writers, principally Apion. In addition to these literary sources we have a papyrus 'document' normally taken to be an exact copy of a letter written by Claudius to the Alexandrians.[9] However, as I will argue below, there are several reasons for suspecting that the copyist may have excerpted and modified the contents of the original letter.

The history of this period has been discussed many times by modern scholars.[10] Nonetheless even the chronology remains controversial. The problem is compounded by the fact that any historical reconstruction must rely heavily on information from the *Acta Alexandrinorum* stories, information that can be anachronistic, implausible, misleading and unreliable on occasion, as I will argue below.

There are some fixed points of chronology. The visit of King Agrippa to Alexandria which ignited the violence took place in the summer of AD 38.[11] The riots were over by the time that the prefect Avillius Flaccus was arrested and taken to Rome in the autumn of AD 38.[12] His successor Vitrasius Pollio had arrived by 20 October AD 38.[13] Greek and Jewish embassies left Alexandria to meet with Gaius following the arrest of Flaccus, sailing in the middle of a stormy winter.[14] On arrival in Rome, the Jews briefly met with Gaius in the gardens of his mother Agrippina, before arguing their case fully, opposite a Greek embassy, at a later date in Rome.[15] The date of the first meeting is controversial, but Philo clearly states that the second meeting took place after Gaius' German expedition.[16] Gaius was in Germany by

[9] *CPJ* II 153.

[10] The studies include: Barraclough 1984: 418–36; Kraus Reggiani 1984: 554–86; Hennig 1975: 317–35; Kasher 1985; Smallwood 1976: 220–56; Pucci 1990: 227–35; Schäfer 1997: 136–60; Schwartz 1990: 77–89.

[11] Philo relates episodes from the rioting which can be dated to July and August AD 38, which fixes Agrippa's visit to June AD 38. *Flacc*. 56 states that during the rioting the Alexandrian Greeks broke into Jewish workshops which had been closed as a sign of mourning for Drusilla, Gaius' sister who died 10 June AD 38. Allowing time for the news to travel to Alexandria the mourning would have occurred early in July AD 38. *Flacc*. 81 states that the rioting continued beyond Gaius' birthday (31 August). On the chronology see Kushnir-Stein 2000: 227–42 and Kerkeslager 2006: 367–400.

[12] Philo *Flacc*. 116. He was arrested during the autumnal feast of the Tabernacles festival, which took place in late September–early October. Van der Horst 2003: 198 dates this festival to mid-October.

[13] *BGU* IV 1078. See Schwartz 1982: 190.

[14] Philo *Leg*. 190.

[15] *Ibid*. 181, 349–67.

[16] *Ibid*. 356–7. 'We sacrificed (ἐθύσαμεν), and hecatombs at that . . . It is not once but three times that we have done this . . . the third was in anticipation of your victory in Germany.'

27 October AD 39, and is not attested back in Italy until May AD 40.[17] He did not enter Rome until 31 August AD 40.[18] This second meeting must therefore have taken place between September AD 40 and Gaius' assassination on 24 January AD 41. It was between their two meetings with Gaius that the Jews learnt of his plan to desecrate the Temple in Jerusalem.[19] The Jews in Alexandria rioted in February AD 41 upon hearing of Gaius' assassination.[20] Greek and Jewish embassies were dispatched to Rome to congratulate the new emperor Claudius and also to secure his favour. Claudius' ruling was published in Alexandria on 10 October AD 41.[21]

By the time of Gaius' accession in March AD 37 Avillius Flaccus had been in office for five years. According to Philo, Flaccus feared his imminent recall and became paranoid that Gaius might use complaints made by the Alexandrians as a pretext to settle a personal vendetta. Flaccus had allegedly been involved in the persecution of Gaius' family during Tiberius' reign, and early in AD 38 Gaius had removed two of Flaccus' allies in the imperial court, Tiberius Gemellus and Naevius Macro. Macro had been declared Flaccus' replacement as Prefect of Egypt but was compelled to commit suicide before he took up the post.[22] Philo states that Flaccus entered into an alliance with Alexandrian Greek politicians who promised to intercede on his behalf and protect him from the wrath of the emperor, in return for which they demanded that Flaccus surrender and sacrifice the Alexandrian Jews.[23] Flaccus allegedly did not pass on the Alexandrian Jews' congratulations to Gaius on his accession, and the Jews gave a letter to Agrippa detailing other abuses in AD 38.[24] Such pacts between Roman officials and local elites are well attested in the Roman Empire. The Cretan Claudius Timarchus, for instance, boasted that it depended on him whether provincial governors received the thanks of the provincial assembly.[25] Nonetheless the historicity of Flaccus' 'anti-Jewish' pact is difficult to ascertain. Early in his prefecture Philo depicts him as taking action against the Alexandrian Greeks by closing down certain clubs and associations and persecuting their leaders to ensure stability in the city.[26] Measures which appeared anti-Jewish to Philo could have been taken with a similar aim.

The serious rioting in Alexandria in AD 38 was ignited by the visit of Gaius' friend, the Jewish king Agrippa I. Philo is reticent about the purpose

[17] Smallwood 1967: nos. 9–10 (fragments of the *AFA*). [18] Suet. *Calig.* 49.2. [19] Philo *Leg.* 186–8.
[20] Joseph. *AJ* 19.278. [21] *CPJ* II 153 ll. 11–13.
[22] Dio 59.10.6. The fact is not mentioned by Philo. An inscription, *AE* 1957 250, confirms that Macro committed suicide rather than was executed.
[23] Philo *Flacc.* 22–3. [24] *Ibid.* 97–103. [25] Tac. *Ann.* 15.20.
[26] Philo *Flacc.* 5, 92; on the persecution of the leaders see below pp. 15–17. Seland 1996: 110–27 suggests that similar actions could have been taken against Jewish assemblies and gatherings.

of the visit. However, his claim that Agrippa wished to enter the city unnoticed contradicts his account which reveals that the Alexandrian Jews triumphantly paraded the king through the city, the sight of 'his bodyguard of spear-men, decked in armour gilded with gold and silver' stunning the Alexandrian Greeks.[27] The Alexandrian Greeks, enraged that the Jews could parade a king while they could not even convene a council, congregated at the gymnasium and staged a parody of Agrippa's parade, with a madman, Carabas ('cabbage'), playing the role of the king.[28] Following the mock procession the Greeks burnt many synagogues and desecrated others by erecting images of Gaius in them. It may be the case that the death of Gaius' sister Drusilla exacerbated the situation and further emphasised the differences between the two sides as the Jews could not worship her images which would have accompanied the public mourning in the city in July AD 38.[29] Flaccus allegedly turned a blind eye to this disorder and issued an edict which destroyed the Jews' *politeia* by declaring them 'aliens and foreigners'.[30] The Jews were herded into the Delta quarter of the city. Thirty-eight members of the Jewish council were marched to the theatre, where they were scourged, tortured, hung, and even crucified amid a Greek celebratory festival. Further atrocities followed until the violence was quelled by the Roman authorities.[31] Depending as it does on a belligerent Philo, it is difficult to assess the historicity of the account and the role of Flaccus in the rioting.[32] With the legions stationed at Nicopolis at his disposal, it is unlikely that Flaccus would have allowed the violence to continue for the length of time that Philo suggests.[33] It seems most likely that the Romans would have intervened to end the rioting at the first signs of trouble, although retaliatory violence from both sides created further serious incidents. Orders to expel 'aliens and foreigners' frequently accompanied post-rioting punitive measures in the city (see below pp. 133–8), and it may have been the Alexandrian Greeks' interpretation of Flaccus' edict which led to the treatment of the Jews. Flaccus was arrested in September AD 38 and tried by Gaius early in AD 39, perhaps under the pretext of maladministration. He was found guilty, exiled to Andros, then executed. His

[27] Philo *Flacc*. 27–30. [28] *Ibid*. 36–9. [29] Kerkeslager 2006: 367–400.

[30] Philo *Flacc*. 54. See also pp. 212–20.

[31] Philo gives a full account of the riot in *Flacc*. 29–96 and *Leg*. 120–37.

[32] Philo's accounts are not wholly consistent, compounding the problem. For example, he ascribes the cause of the rioting to Gaius' self-deification in the *Legatio ad Gaium*, ignoring the events in Alexandria to which he attributes the riots in the *Flacc*. Also in the *In Flaccum* the attack on the synagogues precedes Flaccus' revoking of Jewish rights, whereas in the *Legatio ad Gaium* the order is reversed.

[33] Kerkeslager 2006: 367–400 argues that Flaccus was punishing the Jews for violating the funerary rites for Drusilla, although it would be odd for a prefect to take such an action.

execution can be dated to the autumn of AD 39 because Philo states that Gaius' brother-in-law Marcus Lepidus was alive when the order was given. Lepidus' own execution for treason can be dated from other sources.[34]

Flaccus' successor Vitrasius Pollio referred the complicated and delicate legal, social and religious issues that lay behind the rioting to Gaius. Philo relates that rival Greek and Jewish embassies left Alexandria 'in winter' but does not specify whether the year was AD 38–9 or 39–40.[35] Modern scholarship favours the latter date.[36] However, Philo asserts that the Jewish embassy learnt of Gaius' plan to desecrate the Temple in Jerusalem while they were pursuing him in Campania, shortly after their first brief meeting with him.[37] This would make the earlier date more likely. Gaius is attested in Campania in the summer of AD 39.[38] However, he was not in Italy between the autumn of AD 39 and May AD 40. If the embassies had left in AD 39/40 then this first meeting would have occurred in May AD 40 at the earliest. The whole Temple affair would need to be compressed into the second half of AD 40, which cannot be reconciled with the accounts of Philo and Josephus.[39] Philo refers to a Jewish demonstration in Phoenicia against Gaius' scheme in the spring of AD 40.[40] Josephus states that Gaius dispatched Petronius as the new governor of Syria with the brief to erect Gaius' statue in the Temple in the autumn of AD 39. Petronius spent the winter of AD 39/40 in Ptolemais, where he corresponded with Gaius, and remained there until he received a reply.[41] He wrote a further letter from Tiberias in the autumn of AD 40.[42] Josephus' depiction of the Temple affair as a long, drawn out incident is supported by Tacitus' statement that the Jews took up arms against Gaius and Philo's frequent references to Petronius' procrastination.[43] Consequently it seems most likely that the embassies left Alexandria in the winter of AD 38/9.

The Jewish embassy to Gaius, which Philo personally led, consisted of five members, but Philo does not name any of his colleagues.[44] Philo's

[34] Philo *Flacc*. 151, 181–4. Suet. *Claud*. 9.1. talks of the conspiracy 'of Lepidus and Gaetulicus'. An entry was made into the *Acts of the Arval Brethren* (*AFA* xlix.6–8) commemorating Gaius for overcoming the 'wicked plots of Cn. Lentulicus' on 27 October AD 39.

[35] Philo *Leg*. 190.

[36] The case for 39/40 is expounded in Balsdon 1934: 19 and Smallwood 1957: 3–17; 1961: 47–50; 1976: 243.

[37] Philo *Leg*. 181–9.

[38] Dio 59.17; Suet. *Calig*. 19.3.

[39] On the events of the Temple affair see Smallwood 1957: 3–17; Schwartz 1990: 77–89.

[40] Philo *Leg*. 249. Josephus *AJ* 18.263, 270 refers to demonstrations in Ptolemais and Tiberias in Phoenicia, dating the latter to the autumn of AD 40.

[41] Joseph. *AJ* 18.261–2; Philo *Leg*. 248–54. Gaius' reply is reported in *Leg*. 254–60.

[42] Joseph. *AJ* 18.287–8; *BJ* 2.202.

[43] Tac. *Hist*. 5.9. Cf. Philo *Leg*. 220–2 on the delay caused by commissioning a new statue of Gaius.

[44] Philo *Leg*. 371. The three Jewish councillors named in *Flacc*. 76, Evodus, Trypho and Andro, may have possibly been his colleagues.

brother, Alexander, was in Rome at this time on private business, for which Gaius imprisoned him, and is therefore unlikely to have served on the embassy.[45] Philo's nephew, Tiberius Julius Alexander, may have been a member.[46] Philo was chosen as an ambassador presumably because he was a rich, prominent and influential member of the Alexandrian Jewish community.[47] His brother was a Roman citizen and his nephew was betrothed to Agrippa's daughter Berenice. Philo was a Jew steeped in Greek culture and familiar with the writings of Classical Greek authors such as Demosthenes.[48] As a prolific writer in Greek with rhetorical training, Philo matched the Alexandrian Greek ambassadors in terms of culture.

Apion and Isidorus were members of the Greek embassy.[49] Lampon and Dionysius, two leading Alexandrian politicians mentioned by Philo, may have been among their colleagues. Theon, an exegete mentioned in an *Acta Alexandrinorum* story, may be another possibility.[50] Apion, son of Poseidonius, was the leader of the embassy according to Josephus. He was an Egyptian who had been granted Alexandrian citizenship.[51] He had toured Greece, lecturing on Homer, and had taught rhetoric in Rome.[52] He was presumably chosen for his oratory, culture and reputation. His debating skill was reflected in his nickname 'quarrelsome'.[53] He composed an *Egyptian History*, sections of which are cited in Josephus' *Contra Apionem*, and a book *Against the Jews*.[54]

Isidorus, whom Philo depicts as the leader of the Greek embassy, Lampon and Dionysius were popular Alexandrian politicians. Philo uses each name to describe categories of Alexandrian citizens: 'popularity hunters such as Dionysius, document-tamperers such as Lampon and sedition-leaders such as Isidorus'.[55] Philo elsewhere describes Isidorus as a 'symposiarch, table-president and city-troublemaker'.[56] Isidorus had organised demonstrations against Flaccus in the early AD 30s and had subsequently left Alexandria in voluntary exile.[57] These demonstrations are often seen in the light of Flaccus taking action against Alexandrian associations early in his prefecture and issuing an edict of AD 34 prohibiting the carrying of arms without authorisation.[58] Although Philo does not explicitly name Isidorus, the classification of 'sedition-leader' suggests that he was one of the Alexandrian

[45] Joseph. *AJ* 19.276; Turner 1954: 58; Smallwood 1976: 242 n. 87 suggests he was a member.
[46] Terian 1984: 290. [47] Goodenough 1926: 77–9.
[48] Philo uses Demosthenes' rare term *grammatokuphon* to insult Lampon. Demosthenes 18.209; see Thomas 1989: 71. See pp. 16–17.
[49] Joseph. *AJ* 18.257; Philo *Leg.* 355.
[50] He is referred to in *CPJ* II 156a ii.19, 156b i.13–14; *BKT* IX 64. [51] Joseph. *Ap.* 2.32.
[52] Seneca *Ep.* 88.40. [53] See Jacobson 1977: 413–15.
[54] Clement *Strom.* 1.21.101.3–4. These may be the same work, an anti-Jewish history of Egypt.
[55] Philo *Flacc.* 18–21; van der Horst 2003: 108–10. [56] Philo *Flacc.* 137.
[57] *Ibid.* 135–45. [58] *Ibid.* 5, 92; *W.Chr.* 13.

politicians who allegedly held negotiations with Flaccus to protect the prefect from Gaius' wrath in return for the surrender of the Alexandrian Jews. This would mean that Isidorus had returned to Alexandria in AD 37. In AD 39 he was one of the accusers of the prefect Flaccus at his trial in Rome.[59] The *Acta Alexandrinorum* stories allege that Isidorus was a gymnasiarch, that he acted as an ambassador to Gaius on his accession in AD 37, and that he was also involved in the prosecution of Gaius' Praetorian Prefect, Naevius Macro, early in AD 38.[60] It has been argued that Isidorus never returned to Alexandria after his voluntary exile and that his attested presence in Rome in AD 37, 38, 39 and 41 suggests that he forged a career in Rome as a prosecutor.[61] This would certainly prevent the chronological difficulties presented by the constant travelling between Alexandria and Rome, but it perhaps reads too much into the reliability of the evidence presented in the Alexandrian stories about Isidorus. It has also been suggested that Isidorus was a Roman citizen, based on the discovery of an inscription of an Alexandrian gymnasiarch named Tiberius Claudius G[emin]us, attested as epistrategos and arabarch in the late first century AD, who was the son of Tiberius Claudius Isidorus, who also held the gymnasiarchy.[62] Although the Alexandrian traditions attest that Isidorus was a man of high status, they nowhere suggest that he was a Roman citizen. It is implausible that Isidorus received the citizenship from Claudius in AD 41, as the names Tiberius Claudius would imply, who then executed him and allowed his son to embark upon a career in the imperial administration. The Isidorus of the Alexandrian stories and the Roman citizen are likely to be different men.

Lampon had also suffered under Flaccus' early prefecture and spent two years embroiled in a lawsuit, which he eventually won, accused of 'impiety' against Tiberius by his political opponents. The expense of the case allegedly left him bankrupt and he protested against Flaccus appointing him gymnasiarch, complaining that he did not have sufficient funds for the office. This dates his gymnasiarchy to *c.* AD 34–5. Before this Lampon had taken down the minutes of trials in the prefect's court, presumably either as an official scribe or in the office of *hypomnematographos*, and had allegedly doctored court records in return for bribes.[63] The point of Philo's insult

[59] *Flacc.* 125–6.

[60] *CPJ* II 156a ii.2–3; *CPJ* II 156b ii.7 (gymnasiarch); *P.Giss.Lit.* 4.7 iii.33–4 (earlier ambassador); *CPJ* II 156b i.14 (Macro, see pp. 41, 44). Sijpesteijn 1986: 52 and Delia 1991: 157 assign the gymnasiarchy to AD 53 and AD 38, but these are based on interpretations of the Alexandrian stories. There is no independent evidence for his gymnasiarchy.

[61] Kerkeslager 2005: 49–94.

[62] *SEG* 50.1563; Lukaszewicz 2000: 59–65; 2001: 125–9; Bingen 2002: 119–20.

[63] Kerkeslager 2005: 67 n. 64. On the office of *hypomnematographos* see Whitehorne 1987: 101–25.

'record-porer' (*grammatokuphon*) could be that, like Aeschines, Lampon was a public secretary. Alongside Isidorus, Lampon prosecuted Flaccus in AD 39.[64] Philo does not mention him again but he reappears in several *Acta Alexandrinorum* stories.

A Dionysius is listed as an ambassador to an emperor who may be either Gaius or Claudius in *P.Oxy.* XLII 3021, but given the popularity of the name it is not possible to equate this figure to Philo's Dionysius with certainty; two men with this name served on the embassy to Claudius in AD 41.[65] These men were presumably chosen because they were influential members of the Alexandrian Greek community, and those who had the experience of serving on earlier embassies had developed connections within the imperial court.

The purpose of the Jewish embassy was to discuss their 'sufferings and claims'.[66] Their 'sufferings' must refer to the Jews' treatment during the riots of AD 38, the desecration of their synagogues, and Flaccus' edict denouncing the Jews as aliens and foreigners, which allegedly destroyed their *politeia*. What constituted their 'claims' is far more controversial. Clearly the Jewish exemption from the imperial cult was one of the major issues discussed, as both Philo's and Josephus' accounts of the meeting with Gaius focus heavily on this.[67] Philo reports Gaius' decision on this matter: 'I think that these men are not so much criminals as lunatics in not believing that I have been given a divine nature.' Although Philo does not explicitly say so, the preceding phrases ('God took pity on us and turned Gaius' heart to mercy', 'he (Gaius) became gentler') imply that Gaius verbally confirmed the Jews' exemption from the imperial cult. Philo also mentions that one of the 'claims' was 'showing that we are Alexandrians' and reports that Gaius asked the Jews to speak about their *politeia*.[68] It remains unclear whether Philo's embassy merely wanted a return to the situation before AD 38, or to improve the status of the Alexandrian Jews, or, indeed, both.[69] The purpose of the Greek embassy to Gaius was to defend their part in the rioting of AD 38 and to ensure that the Jews did not return to, or improve upon, the status that they had enjoyed before the riots. The *Acta Alexandrinorum* stories stress the concerted efforts of the Greek ambassadors to downgrade the status of the Alexandrian Jews.

However, Gaius did not hear the embassies until September AD 40 at the earliest. He had therefore left an important embassy waiting for almost two

[64] Philo *Flacc.* 125–34.
[65] On *P.Oxy.* XLII 3021 see pp. 30–1. On the Dionysii in Claudius' letter to the Alexandrians see pp. 20–3.
[66] Philo *Leg.* 178; cf. *ibid.* 195, mentioning 'both' the embassies' aims. See also Collins 2005: 14–18 and Appendix II.
[67] Joseph. *AJ* 18.257–60; Philo *Leg.* 355–67. [68] Philo *Leg.* 363; cf. *ibid.* 193–4. [69] See pp. 212–20.

years before granting it a full hearing. This seems an unnaturally long time, even though Josephus implies that emperors were generally slow to receive embassies.[70] Nevertheless, Gaius had briefly met the Jewish embassy in AD 39 and had received their petition.[71] He may also have considered that the trial of Flaccus resolved some of their grievances. The cause of the delay may have been Gaius' desire to visit Alexandria to deliver a ruling in person.[72] Philo mentions that Gaius' projected visit to Alexandria was imminent while the embassies were waiting to meet him (i.e. in AD 39).[73] He was forced to defer this trip because of the urgent need to remove a potential threat, Gaetulicus, from command of the German legions. Embassies usually followed emperors when they left Rome, but Gaius must have ordered that he was not to be disturbed by embassies whilst campaigning.[74] On his return to Rome, he revived his plan to visit Alexandria, and his departure was imminent in January AD 41.[75]

Gaius met the rival embassies at some point between September AD 40 and January AD 41. According to Philo he was initially critical and condescending towards the Jewish embassy but did listen to their arguments before dismissing both embassies. Philo leaves it unclear, perhaps deliberately, whether or not Gaius gave at least a verbal indication of his judgement. Other sources suggest that the Alexandrian Greek embassy was successful. Josephus states that Gaius refused to listen to Philo's whole speech, dismissed him angrily and promised to punish the Jews at a later date.[76] An *Acta Alexandrinorum* story, *P.Giss.Lit.* 4.7, cites a letter of Gaius to the Alexandrians in which he sides with the Alexandrian Greeks against their 'accusers', following the advice of Isidorus, although no independent evidence of a written verdict exists.[77] An anti-Jewish judgement delivered by Gaius could be connected with the riot of the Alexandrian Jews early in AD 41, although Josephus attributes this to a celebration of Gaius' assassination on 24 January AD 41.[78]

From comparative evidence we can calculate that news of Claudius' accession would have reached Alexandria by the end of February AD 41.[79] A new Greek embassy, and presumably also a Jewish one, were then sent to

[70] Joseph. *AJ* 18.170. [71] Philo *Leg.* 178. [72] Salvaterra 1989: 631–56.

[73] Philo *Leg.* 172, 250, 338. Cf. Suet. *Calig.* 49.2.

[74] E.g. *P.Oxy.* XLII 3020 (discussed p. 50), an Alexandrian embassy that followed Augustus to Gaul; see also Millar 1977: 38–9. Cf. Suet. *Tib.* 40 – Tiberius ordered that no one should petition him when he left Capri.

[75] Joseph. *AJ* 19.81. [76] Joseph. *AJ* 18.259–60.

[77] *P.Giss.Lit.* 4.7 iii.27–35. [78] Joseph. *AJ* 19.278.

[79] See Duncan-Jones 1990: 7–29. Nero's accession was known in Egypt thirty-five days after Claudius' death (*P.Oxy.* VII 1021); Galba's was known in Alexandria twenty-seven days after Nero's death (*OGIS* 669); Otho's was known at Memphis twenty-six days after Galba's death (*SB* XII 11044).

Rome to congratulate the new emperor. If Gaius had not delivered a written verdict before his assassination then the old sets of ambassadors may have remained in Rome; later traditions place Philo in Rome during Claudius' reign.[80] It has been suggested that Claudius met with the embassies waiting for Gaius' response early in AD 41 and issued an edict favouring the Alexandrian Jews, which is cited in Josephus' writings.[81] However, this is implausible because the authenticity of Josephus' edict is questionable and one would need to imagine that Claudius completely reversed his policy only months later after meeting the new embassies.

The earliest date that Claudius could have heard the new embassies would have been March–April AD 41, immediately after they arrived. His response was published in Alexandria on 10 October AD 41 but cannot help to date the meeting as the date clause is not preserved in our copy of the letter and other emperors took a long time to respond to embassies of congratulation.[82] It is possible that Claudius' first appointment to the prefecture of Egypt, Aemilius Rectus, took the letter to Alexandria with him in the autumn of AD 41.

The names of the twelve members of the Greek delegation sent to congratulate Claudius on his accession are listed in the papyrus copy of Claudius' letter to the Alexandrians: Tiberius Claudius Balbillus, Apollonius son of Artemidorus, Chaeremon, Marcus Julius Asklepiades, Gaius Julius Dionysius, Tiberius Claudius Phanias, Pasion, Dionysius son of Sabbion, Tiberius Claudius Archibius, Apollonius son of Ariston, Gaius Julius Apollonius, and Hermaiscus.[83] The embassy was impressive in both size and culture. No less than six members were Roman citizens, two of whom were presumably given the citizenship by Claudius on this embassy, and the high standing of others is known from other sources.[84] Most of its members belonged to the circle of Alexandrian Greek intellectuals, and several were connected with the Museum. The Alexandrians undoubtedly felt that men of this calibre would gain the favour of Claudius. Several of these ambassadors subsequently entered into the imperial service, presumably as a result of this embassy.

[80] E.g. Euseb. *Hist. eccl.* 2.18.7–8. Cf. Suda s.v. Philo Judaeus.

[81] Joseph. *AJ* 19.279–85. Smallwood 1976: 245–6; *CPJ* II p. 49–51.

[82] *P.Oxy.* XLII 3022 – Trajan became emperor on 28 January AD 98, but his response to Alexandria was written, at the earliest, in October AD 98 (see pp. 50–1). Cf. also Smallwood 1967: no. 361 – Gaius' response to an Achaean embassy sent to congratulate him on his accession (28 March AD 37) is dated 19 August AD 37.

[83] *CPJ* II 153 ll. 16–20. Archibius' name is absent from the text and restored on the basis that he is referred to later in the text.

[84] Balbillus had inherited his citizenship from his father, Tiberius Claudius Thrasyllus. Kaplan 1990: 43–62; Kayser 2003: 251–3.

The leader of the embassy, Balbillus, is a well-known historical figure.[85] The son of Tiberius' astrologer, Thrasyllus, Balbillus enjoyed a distinguished equestrian career, which is partially recorded in an inscription at Ephesus. He held several positions in Alexandria and Rome, including being in charge of embassies and Greek replies. He went to Britain with Claudius in AD 43 and received special honours in Claudius' British triumph in AD 44. He was also a procurator in Asia.[86] Balbillus was Nero's first Prefect of Egypt from AD 55–9.[87] He remained prominent in the imperial court, and was a valued astrological adviser to both Nero and Vespasian. Vespasian allowed the Ephesians to found annual games, the Barbillea, in his honour.[88] Members of his family were also prominent in the imperial court. His niece Ennia Thrasylla was the wife of Gaius' Praetorian Prefect, Macro, and allegedly Gaius' mistress.[89] His granddaughter Julia Balbilla later accompanied Hadrian to Egypt in AD 130.

Chaeremon, an Egyptian who had acquired the Alexandrian citizenship, was a famous author. He is called 'Stoic', 'philosopher' and 'sacred scribe' by authors who cite from lost works by Chaeremon which included an *Egyptian History*, *Concerning Comets*, a work on hieroglyphics and a grammatical treatise.[90] The Suda implies that Chaeremon was the director of the Alexandrian Museum.[91] He was appointed tutor to the youthful Nero.[92] There is no evidence that Chaeremon was also a member of the embassy to Gaius.[93]

None of the other ambassadors are as readily identifiable. Tiberius Julius Asklepiades, perhaps a relative of Marcus Julius Asklepiades, is attested as a gymnasiarch and *archigeron* ('chief of the elders') in this period.[94] One of the Dionysii could be the Alexandrian politician mentioned by Philo. Dionysius son of Theon could belong to the aristocratic Alexandrian family mentioned in documents from the Augustan to the Hadrianic period whose members were all called either 'Dionysius' or 'Theon'.[95] Phanias and

[85] The general consensus is that the four Balbilli mentioned in sources for the first century AD are the same man. See Pflaum 1960–1: 1 no. 15; Magie 1950: 1398–400; Cramer 1954: 92–140; Syme 1958: 508–9. On the separatist viewpoint see Stein 1933: 121–36 and *PIR*² B 38 and C 813.

[86] Smallwood 1967: no. 261a–b.

[87] Tac. *Ann*. 13.22.

[88] Suet. *Ner*. 36.1; Dio 65.9.2. On the Barbillea see Brunet 1997: 137–8; Frisch 1974: 162.

[89] Philo *Leg*. 39–40, 61; Tac. *Ann*. 6.45; Suet. *Calig*. 12.2; Dio 58.28.4.

[90] See Barzanò 1985; Willem van der Horst 1984: 8–45 collects all extant citations from Chaeremon's works.

[91] Suda s.v. Dionysius of Alexandria, son of Glaucon.

[92] Suda s.v. Alexander the Aegean.

[93] As suggested in Willem van der Horst 1984: xi n. 22.

[94] See Heichelheim 1942: 17.

[95] Musurillo 1954: 102–4. Sijpesteijn 1976: 5. This family may also be related to the Alexandrian Stoic philosopher of the Augustan period – Suda s.v. Theon of Alexandria the Stoic philosopher.

Hermaiscus may be the ancestors of two later Alexandrian ambassadors.[96] The family of Pasion son of Potamon may be referred to in Nero's letter to the Alexandrians and may also be related to Potamon, an Alexandrian philosopher of the Augustan period mentioned in the Suda.[97]

The names of the Jewish ambassadors are conspicuously absent from the papyrus copy of Claudius' letter. One possible candidate could be Philo's nephew, Tiberius Julius Alexander, as he also entered the Roman imperial service shortly after the embassy, holding the equestrian post of *epistrategos* of the Thebaid in AD 42.[98] The Jews were chastised by Claudius for sending 'two embassies, as though they lived in two cities, a thing which has never been done before', an obscure remark for which there has been no adequate explanation.[99]

Both embassies to Claudius had the formal purpose of congratulating him on his accession and returned to the issues on which Gaius had apparently not given a formal ruling. The novelty of these embassies was that the Jews had to defend themselves for their role in the riots of AD 41, for which the Greeks, particularly Dionysius, attempted to gain retribution. Claudius' response in his letter implies that the Jews were attempting to improve their status on this occasion. The Greeks reminded Claudius of their goodwill to the emperor and his family and requested permission to institute honours for him. They proceeded to appeal for him to confirm the established privileges of Alexandrian citizens, to prevent non-citizens from irregularly obtaining Alexandrian citizenship by enrolling in ephebic training, to appoint priests of Augustus by lot, to limit civic office-holding to three years in order to prevent abuses of power, and to convene a *boule*.

Claudius' response was issued with the aim of preventing further civic disturbances, and both sides partially gained their aims. Claudius accepted some of the Alexandrian Greeks' honours and declined others. He agreed to the subordinate Alexandrian requests but refused to found a *boule* or to hold an inquiry into the rioting of AD 41. He also warned the Greeks to behave kindly to their Jewish neighbours, referring to the rioting, presumably in AD 38, as 'the war against the Jews'. He did not censure the Alexandrian Jews for their recent rioting and restored their pre-AD 38 legal, social and religious privileges. However, he gave a series of prohibitions to the Jews: he warned them sternly not to seek to improve their status because they

[96] Julius Phanias and Hermaiscus in *CPJ* II 157. [97] See p. 50; Suda s.v. Potamon of Alexandria.
[98] Terian 1984: 291. [99] *CPJ* II 153 ll. 90–1. On the two embassies see p. 26.

already enjoyed many things in a city which was 'not their own', not to send two embassies to him, not to gain Alexandrian citizenship by means of the *ephebeia*, which is the most likely meaning of the prohibition on taking part in games in the gymnasium.[100] The Jews were also not to invite other Jews from Syria into the city as they had in the AD 41 riots. If they disobeyed, Claudius would proceed against them as though they were stirring up a plague for the whole world. He ended his response by warning both sides about their future conduct:

> With regard to the responsibility for the disturbances and civil strife, or rather, if I must speak the truth, the war against the Jews, I have decided not to conduct a detailed investigation, although your ambassadors, particularly Dionysius son of Theon, in a spirited confrontation made many efforts on your behalf, but I am storing up an unyielding indignation against those who renewed the conflict. I tell you plainly that, unless you immediately put a stop to this destructive and mutual enmity, I shall be forced to show what it is like when a benevolent ruler is moved to righteous indignation. Therefore I once again ask the Alexandrians to behave gently and kindly towards the Jews who have dwelt in the same city for many years, and not to dishonour any of their customs in their worship of their god, but to permit them to observe their customs, as they did in the time of the divine Augustus and as I too have confirmed, after hearing both sides. On the other hand I order the Jews not to aim at more than they have previously had and not to send – as if they lived in two cities – two embassies in future, something which has never been done before, and not to take part in the games presided over by the gymnasiarchs and the *kosmetai* since they enjoy what is theirs and possess an abundance of all good things in a city which is not their own. Nor are they to bring in or admit Jews coming from Syria or Egypt, a practice which I shall be forced to view with notably greater suspicion. If they disobey, I shall proceed against them in every way as fomenting a common plague for the whole world. If both sides change their present ways and are willing to live in gentleness and kindness with one another, I for my part will do my utmost for the city, as one which has long been closely connected to the house of my ancestors. I testify that Balbillus my friend has always exercised the greatest care for you in his dealings with me and has now conducted your case with the greatest zeal, as has my friend Tiberius Claudius Archibius. Farewell.[101]

Claudius therefore simply restored the pre-AD 38 situation and did not address the fundamental problems causing the divisions in Alexandria. Although violence between the Greeks and the Jews is not attested again in Alexandria until AD 66, this probably had more to do with the firm

[100] For the problem of the word ἐπισπαίειν see App. 1, pp. 185–6. I have taken it to mean 'not to struggle in', i.e. 'not to take part in' – see Harris 1976: 92. Gruen 2002: 80 alternatively suggests that the Jews were prohibited from 'pouring into' and disrupting the Greek games.

[101] *CPJ* II 153 ll. 73–107.

attitude adopted by the prefects appointed by Claudius and Nero rather than Claudius' 'settlement'.

The *Acta Alexandrinorum* stories claim that Claudius tried and executed two Alexandrian ambassadors, Isidorus and Lampon, and set their trial firmly in the context of the Graeco-Jewish dispute. Although the general consensus is that a trial did take place, the historicity of this trial has been questioned because there is no independent evidence. Also, Isidorus and Lampon are not listed as ambassadors to Claudius in the papyrus copy of the letter, and such a trial would contradict Claudius' assertion in the letter that he did not wish to hold an inquiry to identify the perpetrators of the violence in the period AD 38–41.[102] One reason for their executions could be the involvement of Isidorus and Lampon in political intrigue during Gaius' reign. In the surviving stories of the trial Isidorus is chastised for 'killing' many of Claudius' friends and defends himself by claiming to have served Gaius faithfully, by prosecuting his enemies for him. He offers to perform the same service for Claudius.[103]

The date of the trial, which is billed as the dispute of Isidorus against King Agrippa, is highly controversial. The *Acta Alexandrinorum* stories date the trial to the fifth and sixth of Pachon (30 April–1 May), but the year is not specified. Details from the stories suggest that the most plausible date is AD 41 or 53. All the participants, Isidorus, Lampon, Balbillus and King Agrippa, can be placed in Rome in AD 41. Balbillus' busy career in the imperial service, which began shortly after and possibly as a result of the embassy in AD 41, makes it seem unlikely that he acted as an ambassador or representative of Alexandria in the AD 50s.[104] Agrippa I, whose visit to Alexandria in AD 38 caused the rioting there, did not return to Rome after AD 41 and died in AD 43.[105] His son Agrippa II is attested in Rome in AD 52 or 53, when he intervened in a dispute between Jews and Samaritans which was heard in the imperial court.[106] However, there are no recorded connections between Agrippa II and Alexandria or its ambassadors. Other internal details cannot be used to date the trial conclusively. Two other participants, T[a]rquinius and Aviolaus, who appear as members of the imperial *consilium* in the story, have been identified as M. Tarquitius Priscus and M. Acilius Aviola, two senators who were active in the AD 50s.[107] However, Aviolaus could also be identified as the consul of AD 24, who was proconsul of Asia in AD 38–9, and T[a]rquinius could be an otherwise unknown senator. The text preserves

[102] Musurillo 1954: 123–4. [103] *CPJ* II 156d ll. 5–7. [104] See pp. 20, 125.
[105] Schwartz 1990: 145–9, 203–7. [106] Joseph. *AJ* 20.118–36.
[107] Tac. *Ann.* 12.59, 14.46. Tarquitius was expelled from the Senate in AD 53; Aviola was consul in AD 54.

only the last few letters of the name of the imperial gardens where the trial took place: the '[-]lian gardens'. The four known possibilities are the [Lucul]lan gardens, acquired in AD 47–8, the [Lol]lian gardens, acquired in AD 49, the [Stati]lian gardens, acquired in AD 53, or the [Servi]lian gardens, which are not attested as an imperial possession until Nero's reign although they may have been acquired by an earlier emperor.[108]

The content of the trial strongly suggests that it occurred in AD 41 because sections of it concern the rights and the status of the Alexandrian Jews, an issue that Claudius dealt with in the year AD 41 and never, as far as we know, readdressed.[109] One cannot dismiss the possibility that the references to the 'Jewish problem' may be later, unhistorical, additions, as all the other 'details' in the story may be. Nevertheless, although the trial cannot be dated with any certainty, by making the 'Jewish problem' central to the trial scene, the writer(s) wanted Isidorus' trial to be viewed against the historical background of AD 38–41.

THE TRADITIONS CONCERNING THE EMBASSIES TO GAIUS AND CLAUDIUS

The controversy caused by these historical events inspired a great amount of literary activity. In the AD 40s 'documents' concerning the events were being 'copied' and circulated around Egypt, and individual ambassadors, such as Philo, Apion and Chaeremon, wrote personal and polemical accounts about their embassies. While this contemporary literary activity is not unusual, the fact that later generations took such an interest in the events is. A generation later Josephus returned to the problem of the embassies in his historical works, and the *Acta Alexandrinorum*, which continued to be copied and read, and, as I will argue below, amended and revised, show that the stories about the embassies remained important and relevant two centuries later. I will examine here the 'documentary' and 'literary' responses to the embassies, beginning with the former for convenience, and show how the traditions about them developed and evolved throughout the Principate. Although I comment on the 'documentary' and 'literary' nature of the individual texts, it will become immediately apparent that few of the

[108] See Richardson 1992: 199–200, 203–4 for the history of the gardens. On the Lucullan gardens, also known as the 'gardens of Asiaticus', see Plut. *Luc.* 39.2; Dio 60.31.5. The Statilian gardens were best known as the *horti Tauriani* (*ILS* 5998). On the Servilian gardens see Tac. *Ann.* 15.55; Suet. *Ner.* 47.1. They were possibly acquired from M. Servilius Nonianus (Tac. *Ann.* 14.19), although Tiberius may have acquired them from Servilius Vatia (*PIR*[1] S 430). Less likely are the *horti Scapulani* and *horti Siliani*, both of which are only attested in the first century BC.

[109] *CPJ* II p. 68–9. See App. II.

texts fall neatly into either category, and I will discuss their nature in more detail in chapter 3.

DOCUMENTARY RESPONSES

The earliest responses to the controversial embassies came in the form of 'documents' which were circulated around Egypt. We possess what would appear to be two versions of Claudius' letter to the Alexandrians, one preserved in the papers of a Hellenised Egyptian named Nemesion and the other cited in the writings of Josephus. I do not believe that either version is a verbatim copy of Claudius' response, although Nemesion's is the closer. Both versions are excerpted and amended to highlight the portions of the response which are favourable to the Alexandrian Greeks and the Jews respectively. Therefore in the immediate aftermath of the embassies it would appear that both the Alexandrian Greeks and Jews used the response of Claudius as propaganda to proclaim their embassies victorious.

Nemesion was a local taxation official in the village of Philadelphia in the Arsinoite nome. His copy of the letter was made for his own private use and was scribbled onto the verso of a papyrus that had already been used for a tax register. Nemesion was not an Alexandrian citizen and had no direct links with the city. Several of his fellow villagers had business interests with Alexandria, and one displayed anti-Jewish sentiments in a personal letter.[110] The presence of the letter among Nemesion's papers suggests that the stories of the embassies were widely popular and that the population of Roman Egypt was taking an active interest in the Graeco-Jewish dispute at Alexandria. The Hellenised Nemesion may have sympathised with the plight of the Alexandrian Greeks. It must therefore be questioned how accurately he 'copied' the letter, or if he copied an already 'edited' version of the letter. There are some striking omissions from this 'copy', suggesting that it is an excerpt rather than a verbatim, direct copy. Nemesion's version omits the date clause of the letter itself. While it lists all the Greek ambassadors, albeit in a garbled form, the names of the Jewish ambassadors are notably absent, despite the fact that Claudius speaks directly to the Jews in a section of the letter. The honours voted to Claudius by the Alexandrian Greeks and his acceptance of some of them are listed in full, but no mention is made of any diplomatic honours which the Alexandrian Jews must have offered. It has been noted many times that Nemesion's copy is very careless, his

[110] *CPJ* II 152. In a letter dated 4 August AD 41 Sarapion warns his business agent in Alexandria: 'You too beware of the Jews.' On the origin of this letter see Butin and Schwartz 1985: 127–9; see pp. 114–15.

so-called 'slips of the pen' frequently rendering sections of the text highly ambiguous and unintelligible.[111] I have also argued above that Claudius, intent on restoring the peace, delivered a neutral settlement. Yet the tone of this version of the letter favours the Greeks. They are given a verbal slap on the wrist for starting a 'war against the Jews', while the Jews are castigated and given a series of prohibitions of what they can and cannot do in a city 'which is not their own'. This hostile tone cannot be solely explained by the role of the Jews in the riots of AD 41. In one of the most enigmatic sections of the letter Claudius chastises them for sending him two embassies. The generally accepted solution is that the Jews sent embassies representing the Hellenised Jewish elite and the lower orders of the Alexandrian Jews, but this is not plausible as the Jews must have realised that such an approach would irritate Claudius and be harmful to their case.[112] I would suggest that our copyist, by excerpting and modifying this section of the letter, has left this remark more obscure than it was originally. The omission of a few words or lines and the modification of several verbs could well be responsible for this effect.

Josephus, writing a generation later, 'cites' two edicts issued by Claudius in response to the embassies. The first of them is addressed to 'Alexandria and Syria', the second 'to the whole world'. Josephus' narrative implies that these edicts were issued immediately after Gaius' death. However, it is difficult to reconcile the pro-Jewish/anti-Greek tone of these edicts with the pro-Greek/anti-Jewish tone of Nemesion's version of Claudius' letter, written only a few months later. The usual solution to the contradiction is the implausible assumption that Claudius met the embassies who were sent to Gaius immediately after his accession, and delivered his pro-Jewish edicts, before meeting new embassies from Alexandria later in the year and issuing an entirely different ruling in his letter.[113] When Josephus' 'citation' of Claudius' 'edict to Alexandria and Syria' is examined in detail, it becomes apparent that it is no more than an abbreviated, amended version of Claudius' letter to the Alexandrians, which emphasises the portions of the letter which were favourable to the Jews:[114]

Tiberius Claudius Caesar Augustus Germanicus, of tribunician power, speaks. Having from the first known that the Jews in Alexandria called Alexandrians were fellow colonisers from the earliest times jointly with the Alexandrians and received equal civic rights from the kings, as is manifest from the documents in

[111] Bell 1924: 2; *CPJ* II p. 37. [112] See the discussion in *CPJ* II pp. 50–3; Smallwood 1976: 248.
[113] See p. 19.
[114] First suggested in Musurillo 1954: 120 n. 4, and argued at length in Hennig 1975: 327–30 and Schwartz 1990: 99–106.

their possession and from the edicts; and that after Alexandria was made subject to our empire by Augustus their rights were preserved by the prefects sent from time to time and that these rights have never been disputed; moreover that at the time when Aquila was at Alexandria, on the death of the ethnarch of the Jews, Augustus did not prevent the continued appointment of ethnarchs, desiring that the several subject nations should abide by their own customs and not be compelled to violate the religion of their fathers; and learning that the Alexandrians rose up in insurrection against the Jews in the midst of the time of Gaius Caesar, who through his great folly and madness humiliated the Jews because they refused to transgress the religion of their fathers by addressing him as a god: I desire that none of their rights should be lost to the Jews on account of the madness of Gaius, but their former privileges also be preserved to them; and I enjoin upon both parties to take the greatest precaution to prevent any disturbance arising after the posting of my edict.[115]

The second edict, allegedly delivered to the whole world, allows all other Jews in the empire to enjoy the restored status of the Alexandrian Jews.

Josephus' version of Claudius' response is considerably less official in tone than Nemesion's and contains several omissions, amendments and striking factual errors. As in Nemesion's version, Claudius restores the religious rights of the Alexandrian Jews. However, their political rights and legal and social status are not commented upon although these were issues raised by the Jewish embassy. The suggestion that the Alexandrian Jews were given 'equal civic rights' to the Alexandrian Greeks by their kings is a dubious claim which Josephus repeats elsewhere in his writings.[116] Philo states that, when the Jewish ethnarch died in *c.* AD 10–11, a council of Jewish elders was appointed in place of an ethnarch.[117] Josephus is presumably responding to an argument used against the Jews by the Alexandrian Greek embassy, that Augustus limited Jewish rights by ending the ethnarchy. However, an emperor would not need to make such a defensive statement in an official letter.[118] Claudius' apportioning of the blame for the rioting of AD 38 to the Greeks in the edict is a complete reversal of the policy adopted in his letter, where he refuses even to investigate the rioting of AD 41. It is implausible that an emperor would refer to the policy of his predecessor as 'folly' or 'mad'.[119] There are other significant parallels between Josephus' edict and

[115] Joseph. *AJ* 19.279–85. [116] See pp. 212–20.

[117] Philo *Flacc*. 74; Joseph. *BJ* 7.409–19 shows that the Jewish *gerousia* was in charge of Jewish affairs in the AD 70s.

[118] Schwartz 1990: 104.

[119] Claudius usually speaks of his predecessors and their decisions in a more professional manner. In the closest comparable text, *ILS* 206, Claudius states that a problem has remained open due to Tiberius' frequent absence from public affairs and because Gaius neglected to ask for a report on the matter.

Nemesion's version of Claudius' letter. The edict was sent to Alexandria and Syria; the letter prevents Alexandrian Jews from inviting their Syrian kinsmen into the city. Both edict and letter were written in response to the AD 41 rioting, and in both documents Claudius warns each side not to cause further strife in the city. For the apologetic purposes of Josephus (or his source), it was unnecessary to record the whole letter. Josephus instead excerpted and amended the sections that were favourable to the Jews.

Josephus' citation of these 'documents' is therefore highly arbitrary. Even referring to the edicts as 'documents' would appear to be straining modern definitions of the word. Josephus claims elsewhere in his work that he has cited all his documents, including these edicts, completely verbatim, and challenges his readers to look up the originals to check their authenticity.[120] However, in many of his other 'documents' there are a great number of instances of textual corruption, examples where the names of officials and dates are obviously false, and the style and language are so widely removed from that found in inscriptions that their authenticity must be doubted.[121] Josephus is entirely open about his work being both apologetic and selective. He states that his practice in 'citing' from documents has been to refrain 'from citing them all as being both superfluous and disagreeable', leaving it unclear whether he chose not to cite all the available 'documents' on a particular subject, or all of a single 'document'.[122] In the case of Claudius' edicts the latter seems highly probable. After all, if anyone did trouble to look up Claudius' letter, they would find that the emperor had indeed confirmed the pre-AD 38 rights and privileges of the Jews. Josephus' definition of a 'document' differs radically from what modern commentators would consider a document.

Two further 'documents' regarding the embassies were copied in the first century AD. Firstly, *CPJ* II 150, of unknown provenance, was written in the first half of the first century AD. It preserves the final section of a speech of an Alexandrian Greek ambassador to an unidentified emperor in which he lists the advantages that having a *boule* would bring to both Alexandria and the emperor, who is usually considered to be Augustus, although the date of the copy means that Gaius and Claudius are also plausible candidates.[123] If the phrase 'to Alexandria' in ii.23 indicates the intention to travel to Alexandria, then the recipient of the speech would

[120] Joseph. *AJ* 14.188, 14.266. [121] Moehring 1975: 124–58. [122] Joseph. *AJ* 14.266.

[123] The case for the emperor being Augustus depends on two assumptions by the first editors. Firstly that the dramatic date is 30 BC, which the use of the term *laographia* precludes, and secondly that it is a document, Augustus being the only emperor to be called 'Caesar' without further designation in documents. See p. 59.

be Gaius, whose projected visit to Alexandria is discussed above (p. 18). It would be surprising if the Alexandrian Greeks had not requested a *boule* from Gaius, who was well disposed to them.

The content of the speech suggests that the emperor may be Claudius because there are parallels between the requests made by the ambassador and the responses in the papyrus copy of Claudius' letter to the Alexandrians.[124] The ambassador argues that a *boule* could scrutinise candidates for the ephebate and counteract evasion of the poll tax, preventing Caesar from losing revenue. By regulating their own citizenship, the Alexandrians could prevent uncultured and uneducated men from acquiring it and being sent on embassies. By having an annually chosen *boule*, whose secretary would present its proceedings for scrutiny once a year, the Alexandrians would be able to control the nomination and behaviour of its magistrates:

> It is necessary for us to speak at some length. I submit, then, that the council will see to it that none of those who are liable to enrolment for the poll tax diminish the revenue by being listed in the public records along with the *epheboi* for each year; and it will take care that the pure(?) citizen body of Alexandria is not corrupted by men who are uncultured and uneducated. And if anyone be unreasonably burdened by taxes exacted by the *Idioslogos* or by any tax agent who may be oppressing the people, the council, in assembly before your prefect, might lend support to the weak and prevent the income that could be preserved for you from being plundered by anyone at all, simply through lack of remedy. Again, if there should be need to send an embassy to you, the council might elect those who are suitable, so that no one ignoble(?) might make the journey and no one who is capable might avoid the service to his native city. We ask, then, that it be permitted for the council to convene annually, and at the end of each year to submit a report of its transactions . . .
>
> Caesar said: 'I shall come to a decision about these matters . . . to Alexandria.'

Claudius answers these concerns in his letter to the Alexandrians. The sons of slaves who gained citizenship through the *ephebeia* were to have their citizenship removed. The priests of the temple of the imperial cult in Alexandria shall be elected rather than appointed, and Claudius limits magistrates to only holding office for three years, to ensure that they behave 'more moderately . . . for fear of being called to account for abuses of power'. He also instructs his prefect to investigate whether a *boule* would profit Alexandria and himself.[125] Several commentators have identified the 'ignoble', 'uncultured' and 'uneducated' men as Jews, which would support the identification of the emperor as Claudius.[126] This would then mean that

[124] Musurillo 1954: 88; Kasher 1985: 312–13.
[125] *CPJ* II 153 66–72.
[126] *CPJ* II p. 27 suggests that the terms refer to Jews and possibly also Egyptians.

the last line of the text refers to the emperor sending someone, such as a prefect, to Alexandria, as Claudius did with Aemilius Rectus in AD 41.[127] The text therefore appears to be an accurate record of the arguments delivered by the Alexandrian Greek embassy to Claudius.

CPJ II 150 is often taken to be a verbatim copy of the speech, and the case for the text being a 'document' seems confirmed by the 'numbers' at the head of the column, which may form a type of ancient file reference (see p. 110). The language is literary (e.g. *epitropos* rather than *hegemon* for 'prefect'), but an orator would naturally use literary terminology. The comparison of its contents with Claudius' letter to the Alexandrians suggests that this text accurately summarises the original speech although the copyist, or his source, may not have adhered precisely to it. In ii.13 the copyist firstly wrote a phrase, then amended a word before deleting the entire phrase. The scribe may have simply made an error or he may have been adapting and improving the original speech. However, although the speech is preserved as an oration, it must be heavily abbreviated in its current form. After claiming that it is necessary to speak about the matter of the council at some length, the ambassador delivers a short speech, which would take only a few minutes to convey, despite the institution of a council being one of the most important pieces of the embassy's business. Also the arguments, presumably because they are presented in an abbreviated form, are weak and unconvincing.

The second 'document' also shows signs of amendments. *P.Oxy.* XLII 3021 was copied in the latter part of the first century and preserves the line-endings of a single column containing an account of the meeting of Alexandrian Greek and Jewish ambassadors with an emperor, who could be Gaius or Claudius.[128] In the extant section the emperor enters, perhaps with Agrippa, and takes his seat (i.1–2). After this the imperial advisers enter (i.3). The following three lines announce the entrance of the Greek ambassadors, only three of whom are listed in the extant section: Tiberius Claudius [Balbillus(?)], Isidorus and Dionysius. In the following line the ambassadors of the Jews enter, but there is no room for them to be named individually in the way that the Alexandrian Greeks are. Greetings are then offered to the emperor, who asks: 'Ambassadors of Alexandria, [what] do you say [about] the Jews?' The remainder of the column is restored in the *editio princeps* as the speech of the Greek embassy concerning the status of the Alexandrian Jews: 'We [beseech(?)] you, Lord Augustus . . . [the

[127] It is unlikely that the emperor refers to sending a letter to the Alexandrians because, as *CPJ* II p. 29 points out, a letter would be sent to the prefect, as *CPJ* II 153 70 shows.

[128] See note in App. 1, p. 204.

rights] pre-existing for the Jews . . . now deprived . . . of the gods . . . in their temples . . . are trampled . . .' The Alexandrian Greeks may be arguing that the pre-existing rights of the Alexandrian Jews have been abolished (by Flaccus) and may aim their attack against Jewish impiety. The Jews trample upon convention by refusing to worship the emperor as a god in their temples. How could they therefore claim Alexandrian citizenship?[129]

The text is presented in the form of official minutes (*acta*). The speech of the Alexandrian ambassador is about the issues of the day, and there appears to be an attempt to present a case against the Jews, a trait that is lacking among many of the *Acta Alexandrinorum* stories. However, the writer does not individually name any of the Jewish ambassadors, who are simply referred to as 'the Jews', as in other *Acta Alexandrinorum* stories.[130] This would suggest that, even if the account was based on official minutes, the original document has been edited and adapted. The dramatic date of this 'document' is also problematic. Isidorus, an ambassador to Gaius, is listed as fellow ambassador to Dionysius and Balbillus(?), who both served as ambassadors to Claudius. This could confirm the literary nature of this text, perhaps suggesting that the writer may have amalgamated two embassies, as other later writers appeared to do (see pp. 35–6).

LITERARY PRODUCTIONS IN THE FIRST CENTURY AD

Several ambassadors included accounts of the embassies in their literary works. The status of the Alexandrian Jews, one of the major issues raised by both embassies, featured in the lost *Histories* written by two of the Alexandrian Greek ambassadors, Apion and Chaeremon, passages of which are cited in Josephus' writings. Josephus refutes their claims concerning the Alexandrian Jews' right to claim Alexandrian citizenship and the sanctity of the Jewish Temple and religious customs. Josephus states that 'Apion has composed a charge against us quite as though he were conducting a law-suit'.[131] Apion had helped to compose a petition speech against the Jews as a member of the Greek embassy of AD 38/9–40, and his work therefore may well include some of the historical charges levelled against the Jews by the Greek embassy to Gaius.[132] Apion may have claimed to be recording parts of the actual prosecution speech, giving his account an additional air of authenticity.

[129] An argument used by Apion; Joseph. *Ap.* 2.65.
[130] E.g. *CPJ* II 158. *CPJ* II 157 is the only extant story to name the Jewish ambassadors.
[131] Joseph. *Ap.* 2.4. [132] See p. 15.

The Alexandrian Jewish ambassador Philo must have completed his *In Flaccum* and *Legatio ad Gaium* soon after the actual events because he died during the AD 40s. Philo's account of the meeting of the two embassies before Gaius is close in form and subject matter to the *Acta Alexandrinorum* stories (see below). Philo's version of events in Alexandria forms a prelude to the culmination of the work, the meeting before Gaius, which is presented as a trial scene in which the Jews bravely confront the tyrant Gaius on behalf of their fellow Jews. Philo frequently records what was allegedly said at the meeting in direct speech, presumably basing his account on his personal recollection of the event. The direct speech is not presented in the form of minutes but is bound together by a vivid personal narrative detailing Philo's exaggerated feelings and reactions:

> We greeted him with the title 'Augustus Imperator'. His reply was so polite and kind that we despaired not only for our case but also for our lives. For with a sneering grin he said: 'So you are the god-haters, the people who do not believe I am a god – I, who am acknowledged as a god among all other nations by this time but am denied that title by you?'
>
> After giving some of his instructions about buildings, he asked us an important and solemn question: 'Why do you not eat pork?' At this inquiry our opponents burst into such violent peals of laughter, partly because they were really amused and partly because they made it their business as flatterers to let his remark seem witty and entertaining, that one of the servants attending Gaius was annoyed at the scant respect being shown to the emperor, in whose presence it was not safe for people who were not his intimate friends even to smile quietly. We replied by saying: 'Different people have different customs, and we are forbidden to use some things, just as our adversaries are forbidden to use others.' Someone then said: 'For instance, many people do not eat lamb, which is a very ordinary kind of food.' At this Gaius laughed and said: 'Quite right too. For it is not nice.'[133]

Philo incorporates several literary devices into his trial scene which are also to be found embedded in the *Acta Alexandrinorum* stories, albeit with the bias reversed. Philo characterises Gaius as a frivolous emperor because he did not grant the Jews a formal hearing. Gaius heard the embassy while he was inspecting repair work in the gardens of Maecenas and Lamia, two separate gardens which were close together in Rome. Emperors often did hold such meetings in imperial gardens.[134] However, Philo exploits this by complaining that the Jews should have been heard in a courtroom, not

[133] Philo *Leg.* 352–3, 361–3. [134] Millar 1977: 22–3.

a garden, and uses the setting to imply that Gaius did not grant them a fair hearing.[135] He compares the hearing to a dramatic production such as those that Gaius often viewed in his gardens. He describes the Jews as the 'principal actors' in the 'drama' being 'staged'; the hearing is described as a cross between a theatre and a prison; and the Jews were mocked like actors in a mime.[136] The mockery of the hearing was complete when the emperor assumed the role of accuser, rather than judge.[137] The same literary device may be employed in the story of Isidorus' trial, which was also set in imperial gardens (see pp. 23–4).

Philo's Gaius is hostile to the Jews, and Philo stresses that the emperor is in league with the enemy, making the result of the trial a foregone conclusion and emphasising the brave endeavours of himself and his fellow ambassadors. The Alexandrian Greeks, he alleges, had bribed Gaius' influential freedman, Helicon, and he makes several allusions to this compact between the emperor and the Alexandrian Greeks.[138] Similarly emperors are portrayed as hostile to the Alexandrian Greeks in the *Acta Alexandrinorum* stories. In the trial of Isidorus, for example, it is King Agrippa who has turned the emperor against the Alexandrians.

Philo frequently refers to the danger he and his fellow ambassadors were facing, alludes to himself being on the brink of martyrdom, and states that he would gratefully have died for the cause of the Alexandrian Jews. After the Jewish ambassadors learnt of Gaius' plans for the Temple in Jerusalem, they considered facing the emperor and seeking a 'glorious death'. After their second meeting with Gaius, Philo alleges that he would gladly have given his life to restore even a single Law of the Jews.[139] On both occasions, however, Philo decided not to sacrifice his life. The Alexandrian Greeks in the *Acta Alexandrinorum* stories are only too willing to sacrifice themselves for the cause of their fatherland.

One notable link between Philo and the *Acta Alexandrinorum* stories is that Philo shows as little concern with presenting the actual case of either the Jews or the Greeks. Instead he turns the meeting into a dramatic trial scene and focuses on the portrayal of the hostile emperor, hostile accusers and brave Jews, and the insults which the emperor and their accusers allegedly heaped upon the Jews. The parallels are such that if fragments from this section of the *Legatio* were discovered on papyri from Roman Egypt, then they could be mistaken for an *Acta Alexandrinorum* story. This strongly

[135] Philo *Leg.* 349–51. [136] *Ibid.* 351, 359, 368.
[137] *Ibid.* 359–60. [138] *Ibid.* 172, 354. [139] *Ibid.* 192, 369.

suggests that highly coloured reports of the meetings between the embassies and the emperors were being developed in this period, and that ambassadors such as Philo were part of this process.

Josephus, writing in the Flavian period, shows that the stories of the embassies continued to develop and evolve a generation after the events themselves. Josephus evidently knew of Philo's works and may have used them as a source for parts of his own historical works.[140] However, he chose not to follow Philo's account when describing the reception of Philo's embassy before Gaius. He does not record the meeting in direct speech as Philo had, and the emphasis is on the role of Apion rather than Isidorus. His claim that Philo was not allowed to speak contradicts Philo's version of events in the *Legatio ad Gaium*. The claim that the emperor would not listen to the arguments of the delegation is commonplace in the *Acta Alexandrinorum* stories:

> And so Apion spoke many angry words by which he hoped that Gaius would be moved, as might be expected. Philo, who stood at the head of the delegation of Jews, a man held in the highest honour, brother of Alexander the Arabarch and no novice in philosophy, was prepared to proceed with the defence against these accusations.
>
> But Gaius cut him short, told him to get out of his way, and, being exceedingly angry, made it clear that he would visit some outrage on the Jews. Philo, having been treated arrogantly, left the room . . .[141]

The account is so different from Philo's own version of this meeting that Josephus must have used a different source, possibly Apion's own from his historical works. Josephus turns the meeting into a battle between the two leaders of the embassies, Apion and Philo, during the course of which Philo is insulted. Significantly, Josephus felt the need in the AD 90s to refute claims made by Apion about this period in his *Contra Apionem*, and his 'improved' edict to Alexandria (see pp. 26–8) shows that Claudius' response to the embassies and claims made about Jewish rights, such as Augustus' abolition of the ethnarchy, continued to be hotly debated.

LITERARY REACTIONS FROM THE SECOND AND THIRD CENTURIES AD

The final stages in the development of the traditions about the embassies appear in the *Acta Alexandrinorum* stories preserved in copies which were

[140] Schwartz 1990: 1–38. [141] Joseph. *AJ* 18.259–60.

made in the late second–early third century AD. These stories relate meetings between Alexandrian ambassadors and emperors and between Alexandrian politicians and the prefect Flaccus. The traditions culminate in the story of the trial of Isidorus and Lampon before Claudius. What will become evident is that these traditions are not homogenous. They are composed by different authors, are written in different styles, and have different emphases. I will demonstrate how the traditions have evolved by examining the stories of the meetings and of the trial.

Not one single line of the five columns of *P.Giss.Lit.* 4.7, which reports the meetings of two rival embassies before Tiberius and Gaius, is preserved intact.[142] The story begins with an Alexandrian Greek ambassador and a rival ambassador, referred to as 'the accuser' throughout the text, petitioning Tiberius Caesar. One ambassador proclaims: 'Lord emperor [we are sent] by the 173 elders' (i.13–14), i.e. the Alexandrian council of elders, and there follows a reference to '180,000', perhaps the theoretical *numerus clausus* of Alexandrian citizens.

In col. ii the council of elders in Alexandria gives orders to a new embassy, headed by Eulalus, whose colleagues are revealed later in the text to be Areius and Isidorus. The elders order Eulalus to sail to the emperor in Rome (ii.1–2) and the ambassadors arrive at Ostia (ii.3–4), from where they journey to Rome to meet 'the chamberlain of Tiberius' (ii.6–8). The Alexandrians inquire after the emperor's health, but are informed that he is dead (ii.9–10). They are then admitted to Tiberius' successor, Gaius, along with their rival, the accuser. In the following badly damaged lines the Alexandrian Greeks exchange diplomatic pleasantries with Gaius. Areius, for example, claims that Gaius has the gratitude of the Alexandrians and is the 'god of the world and has brought "this city" [i.e. Rome] under his rule' (ii.34–iii.1). The Greeks then introduce Gaius to the nature of the case (ii.11–25); the accuser is a foreigner who claims to be an Alexandrian citizen. The Alexandrian Greeks win their case, and Gaius confirms his decision in a letter to the Alexandrians:

> [Areius(?)] said: 'See then, this foreigner, receiving unregistered citizenship . . .' and he showed the accuser to be unjust. Gaius Caesar ordered the accuser to be burnt. He wrote a . . . letter to the city(?) in these terms: 'Gaius Caesar to the city of Alexandria, greetings . . . benefactors . . . reasons for the war(?) . . . Isidorus having said . . . let them neither have the crown of valour . . .'[143]

Gaius' sentence for the accuser seems harsh although it is compatible with the mainstream literary sources of the Principate, which ascribe a cruel

[142] On this text see App. 1, pp. 195–6. [143] *P.Giss.Lit.* 4.7 iii.20–35.

streak to Gaius.[144] The phrase 'the reasons for the war (*polemos*)' and Gaius' decision, on the advice of Isidorus, to exclude a section of the populace from wearing the crown of valour suggest that the letter refers to the violence of AD 38. These crowns were the prizes for athletic competitions held in the gymnasium and part of the gymnasiarch's official garb, implying that Gaius is prohibiting a section of the populace from entering the gymnasium. The letter, apparently written in AD 37 therefore echoes some of the resolutions expressed in the papyrus copy of Claudius' letter to the Alexandrians in AD 41.[145]

The following column appears to be a narrative focusing on the 'war' referred to in Gaius' letter. The phrases 'falling upon' (iv.21), 'running' (iv.22) and '[after] which [he ordered] many [of them] to be seized and [many of these] he beheaded' (iv.22–4) could belong to an account of the AD 38 rioting. Fragment c may belong to this column and mentions 'the theatre', where the parade featuring the lunatic Carabas was staged and where the Jewish elders were flogged in AD 38.[146] Fragments a and b combine to form the head of a further column and refer to a 'prefect [of Egypt and] Alexan[dria]', presumably Flaccus.[147]

The story presents serious anachronisms and historical problems despite the sections recording the meetings of the embassies with the emperors being written down in the form of official minutes. The Alexandrian Greeks present their case to Tiberius. A second embassy is dispatched from Alexandria, which arrives at Ostia expecting to meet Tiberius. Instead they receive news of Tiberius' death, and they are then granted an audience with Gaius. This dates the story to March AD 37.[148] However, Tiberius spent the latter part of his reign on the island of Capri, not in Rome as the story would suggest. Given the historical background, the 'foreigners' who are claiming to be Alexandrian citizens are likely to be Jews.[149] Yet Gaius in the story appears to give a resolution in his letter in AD 37 to 'the war' which did not happen until AD 38. Also, in barring Jewish entry from the games in the gymnasium, Gaius' judgement is remarkably similar to that later issued by Claudius in AD 41.

One solution could be that the author knew of several Alexandrian embassies to Rome in this period, one which met Tiberius, one which

[144] Cf. *CPJ* II 158 vii.4–8, where unsuccessful Greek ambassadors suffer a similar punishment.

[145] *CPJ* II 153 ll. 73–4 'the war (*polemos*), against the Jews'; 92–4 'not to take part in the games presided over by the gymnasiarchs and *kosmetai*'.

[146] E.g. Phil. *Flacc*. 74, 84.

[147] Supplements from von Premerstein 1939: 11.

[148] Tiberius died on 16 March AD 37 (Tac. *Ann*. 6.50.9; Suet. *Tib*. 73.2) and Gaius entered Rome on 28 March AD 37 (*AFA* xliii.15–17). *P.Ryl*. II 141 shows that news of Gaius' accession had reached Egypt by 27 April AD 37.

[149] *CPJ* II p. 66.

congratulated Gaius on his accession and the third which left Alexandria after the rioting of AD 38, and combined them in his story for dramatic purposes. Another solution could be that the author has confused his tale with, or adapted it to reflect, later events under Gaius and Claudius. In each case an Alexandrian embassy presents its case to an emperor who dies and a new embassy is sent from Alexandria to his successor who delivers a judgement in the form of a letter to the Alexandrians which bars Jews from entering the gymnasium. One wonders if the author knew anything beyond the basic facts and details about the embassies that travelled to Rome in this period. He knew that Isidorus was an ambassador in this period but may have been unclear on the identities of the other ambassadors. It seems too convenient for the embassy to have a persuasive delegate named Eulalus ('sweet-speaker'). Nonetheless the story is unique among the *Acta Alexandrinorum* stories in that the Alexandrian Greeks win their case and their opponents receive the punishment which is reserved for the Greeks in other stories. In doing so the author may be embellishing the traditions which promulgate that Gaius was well disposed towards the Alexandrian Greeks, a claim readily found in the writings of Philo.[150]

CPJ II 154, a fragmentary text from Oxyrhynchus, reports a meeting between two Alexandrian politicians, Dionysius and Isidorus, with the prefect Flaccus in the Alexandrian Serapeum. A woman named Aphrodisia and an 'old man', who is presumably the *prokathemenos*, a temple official or a member of the Alexandrian *gerousia*, are also present:

> Flaccus then went to the Serapeum after giving orders that the business be carried out secretly. Isidorus also went up to the Serapeum with Aphrodisia and Dionysius and, entering the sanctuary, Isidorus and Dionysius bowed to the god. Just then the old man threw himself down on his knees imploring Dionysius and he said:
>
> '[Ill-fated(?)] Dionysius, behold me an old man in front of Serapis. Do not try to struggle against Flaccus but sit down in counsel with the elders . . . your journey . . . Change your mind, Dionysius, my son.'
>
> Dionysius replied: 'You counsel well; but surely you do not want me to refuse Flaccus again [or 'Flaccus to refuse me again']. If I am to meet him . . . I shall go, and willingly.'
>
> Flaccus came up, and seeing Isidorus he said: 'Well the affair is all arranged . . .'
>
> The old man (*prokathemenos*) said: '[I beseech] you by the Lord Serapis, to do no harm to Isidorus and Dionysius. I swear to you . . .'

[150] Another fragmentary text which may be related to the story of this embassy, *P.Med.* inv. 275, is discussed in App. I, p. 198, and App. III, p. 223.

Dionysius said: 'Never . . . to count out five talents all in gold, as we proposed, in the middle of the sanctuary.'[151]

The mysterious 'business' in the temple cannot be identified.[152] However, Flaccus is portrayed both as a threat and an ally to the Alexandrian Greeks, and the reference to the financial 'bribe' suggests that he is being caricatured as a corrupt Roman official. Although the extant section is set in Alexandria, the reference to a 'journey' (ii.61) suggests that the setting is likely to have moved to Rome later in the story. As Dionysius is the most prominent character in the extant section, the text may report the early stages of an *Acta Dionysii*.[153] The story is clearly not based on recorded minutes of this meeting, and other elements confirm its literary nature. The ardent warning of the 'old-man/*prokathemenos*', who fills a dramatic role which is echoed in several *Acta Alexandrinorum* stories, seems designed to test Dionysius' resolve and allow him to make a clear statement of his determination to act for his city ('I shall go, and willingly').[154] The old man's prayer places Isidorus and Dionysius under the protection of Serapis in the same way as the Alexandrian ambassadors in another story.[155] The roles of Flaccus and the Alexandrian leaders in the events of AD 38–41 were of great interest soon after the events themselves, as Philo's *In Flaccum* shows, and stories were still being written and embellished about them 150 years later.

BKT IX 64, a badly abraded late second-century AD fragment from the Fayum, appears to tell the story of three Alexandrian ambassadors, Balbillus (ii.15), Theon (ii.10, 14) and Athenodorus (ii.21), facing an emperor. From the appearance of Balbillus, the most likely dramatic date would be AD 41 and the emperor Claudius. Athenodorus is not listed as an ambassador in Claudius' letter but is mentioned in a section of an *Acta Alexandrinorum* story set in the Trajanic period which refers back to something which happened 'in the time of the divine Claudius'.[156] The scene in what remains of col. i appears to be Alexandria. The mentions of a crowd (i.16), and perhaps running, could belong to a description of crowd violence in

[151] *CPJ* II 154 ll. 25–59.

[152] Von Premerstein 1923: 4–14 suggested that Flaccus was being paid to provide an exit permit to travel to Rome; Musurillo 1954: 95 suggested that he was involved in usury, hence the reference to interest (*tokos*) in ii.60. Cf. Philo *Flacc*. 20–3 and p. 12 on the 'deal' for Flaccus to turn a blind eye to the persecution of the Jews.

[153] Musurillo 1954: 94; Kerkeslager 2005: 61–6 discusses the 'death of Dionysios'. Nonetheless this Dionysius may also appear in other *Acta Alexandrinorum* stories set in this period: *P.Oxy*. XLII 3021 (above pp. 30–1) and perhaps also *P.Oxy*. IV 683 (discussed in App. III, p. 224).

[154] Cf. *CPJ* II 159, where a similar role is given to Heliodorus, who speaks to Appian on his way to execution.

[155] *CPJ* II 157, where Serapis' miraculous intervention temporarily saves the Alexandrians (see p. 95).

[156] *CPJ* II 157 iv.17–19 'Claudius Athen[odorus] . . .'

Alexandria.[157] The mention of 'orders' (i.8) and the command to '[send something?] to the emperor' (i.18) and letters (i.19) suggests that the scene is similar to that in *P.Giss.Lit.* 4.7 ii. 1–3, where the elders brief an embassy.[158]

The second column records a hearing before the emperor, who is simply referred to as 'Lord' in Rome (ii.9). The hearing is presented in the form of official minutes (*acta*). Theon speaks to the emperor about a 'registration' (ii.10–11), presumably referring to the regulation of the registration for Alexandrian citizens, an issue discussed by the Alexandrian Greek embassy to Claudius in AD 41.[159] One ambassador mentions something being established for the common care (ii.15–16) and 'the Alexandrian fortune (*tyche*)' (ii.16–17), which could refer to the institution of a *boule*. In addition there are two references to a 'return' (ii.12, ii.18), the first being a 'return to the fatherland'. The ambassadors could be discussing the possibility that they would not return to their fatherland (i.e. that they could be martyred in Rome). The story uses several phrases that appear in other *Acta Alexandrinorum* stories which were copied in the late second–early third century.[160] Oddly Isidorus, the standard Alexandrian hero of the stories set in this period, is notably absent from the extant section of the text, which focuses solely on the activities of other Alexandrian ambassadors, Balbillus, Theon and Athenodorus.

The traditions about the embassies preserved in these three stories are therefore very diverse. The texts include substantial narrative sections which relate the background stories behind the trial scenes/reception of embassies. Even if the reports of the trials in Rome are based upon minutes the sections of the stories set in Alexandria can have no documentary basis. The thematic links with other *Acta Alexandrinorum* stories show that even the trial scene sections have been fictionalised to some extent. The texts also emphasise the exploits of different ambassadors rather than focusing on Isidorus. Areius and Eulalus are the central characters in *P.Giss.Lit.* 4.7, Dionysius in *CPJ* II 154 and Balbillus in *BKT* IX 64. The writer of *BKT* IX 64 may have adopted a more historical approach than the other two writers, because the ambassadors refer to issues which were discussed by the embassies. Although Dionysius' refusal to listen to the old man's advice suggests that he may not have fared well in the later stages of that story, the ambassadors in *P.Giss.Lit.* 4.7 are resoundingly successful.

The traditions about the embassies culminate in the stories of the trial of Isidorus and Lampon (*CPJ* II 156a, b, c and d). All are of unknown

[157] i.17 [.]δραμα[. .]; cf. *P.Giss.Lit.* 4.7 iv.22 (discussed above).
[158] See App. 1, pp. 195–6 on this text.
[159] See p. 21, perhaps also discussed in *CPJ* II 150 (p. 30).
[160] E.g. τῇ φύσει (i.15), πατρίς (ii.12); cf. *CPJ* II 156b ii.17, i.7–8.

provenance, although *CPJ* II 156b may come from Panopolis, and all are approximately dated to the late second–early third century AD. The four fragments seem to derive from two different versions of the trial scene. *CPJ* II 156a, b and d are written in the same style and are based on one version of the trial. *CPJ* II 156a and d are actually from the same papyrus roll and relate the preliminary and latter stages of the trial respectively, with an unknown amount of text missing in between. *CPJ* II 156b overlaps *CPJ* II 156a ii.5–19, with several minor differences, and continues the story after 156a breaks off. *CPJ* II 156c records a section of the trial in which Isidorus, Agrippa and Balbillus debate the status of the Alexandrian Jews in the presence of the emperor, but it is not clear where this should be located within the trial. I will discuss this text first because it is much different in tone and content from the other versions of the trial.

The extant section of *CPJ* II 156c begins with Isidorus and Balbillus attempting to persuade Claudius to downgrade the Jews to the level of Egyptians, and therefore to status of poll tax payers. Isidorus praises a speech made by his colleague Balbillus, in which he had mentioned 'the race [of the Jews?]' (i.13–14) and taxation (i.15) before launching a vehement attack on the Jewish race.

> Isidorus: 'My Lord Augustus, with regard to your interests, Balbillus indeed speaks well. But to you, Agrippa, I wish to oppose the points you bring up about the Jews. I accuse them of wishing to stir up the entire world . . . We must consider every detail in order to judge the whole people. They are not of the same nature as the Alexandrians, but live rather in the same manner as the Egyptians. Are they not equal to those who pay the poll tax?'
> Agrippa: 'The Egyptians have had taxes levied on them by their rulers . . . But no one has imposed tributes on the Jews.'
> Balbillus: 'Look to what extremes of insolence either his god or . . .'

Isidorus therefore bases his argument that the Jews should pay the poll tax on his belief that they were culturally inferior to the Alexandrians and therefore more on a par with the Egyptians who did pay the poll tax. He sounds very similar to Philo's depiction of him.[161] Agrippa's response must have amused an Alexandrian Greek audience reading the story after

[161] Philo cites a speech of Isidorus in *Leg.* 355–6 in which Isidorus also widens his reference to include Jews living outside of Alexandria: 'The spiteful sycophant Isidorus . . . said: "My Lord, you will hate these Jews here, and the rest of their compatriots too, even more when you learn of their ill-will and disloyalty towards you. When everyone else was offering sacrifices of thanksgiving for your recovery, these people alone could not bring themselves to sacrifice. When I say 'these', I include the other Jews as well."'

the Flavian period (see p. 43). The fragment ends with Balbillus accusing Agrippa of 'insolence'.

The author of the text shows a good knowledge of the issues discussed by the embassies, and this more historical approach sets the text apart from the other fragments of Isidorus' trial in terms of style and tone. As such, although it must occur between *CPJ* II 156b and d, it does not fit neatly into the other versions of the trial. In his attempt to report the case of the Alexandrian Greeks against the Jews the writer reiterates the standard first-century AD slur against the Jews, that they intended to stir up the whole world, an insult which is also found in Claudius' letter and Acts.[162]

The story of the trial in *CPJ* II 156a, b and d begins with a fragmentary discussion between Claudius and his advisers, presumably his *consilium*. Two senators, Tarquinius and Aviolaus, rise and give their opinions to Claudius before he summons the Alexandrian ambassadors and postpones their hearing until the following day. The phrase 'on behalf of his [fatherland]' appears once, and there are at least two references to 'fighting' or 'contending' (i.7, i.10). The senators' speeches have been restored variously to show them speaking for and against the Alexandrians.[163] The senators perhaps both speak in favour of the Alexandrians, because later in the story the Senate as a body is friendly towards them, agreeing that Isidorus deserved a day for a hearing due to his nobility ('because of what sort of man he was').[164]

In col. ii Claudius hears the case of Isidorus, gymnasiarch of Alexandria, against King Agrippa in one of the imperial gardens. Twenty senators, sixteen of whom were consulars, were present as Claudius' *consilium*, and the women of the court also attended the hearing. Isidorus began by urging Claudius to consider the sufferings of his city, and Claudius responded that he would grant him a day. But Isidorus is not given the opportunity to speak, and Claudius' evident hostility gives a clear indication of how the trial will end:

> Claudius Caesar: 'Say nothing . . . against my friend. You have already done away with two of my friends, Theon the exegete and Naevius the Prefect of Egypt and the Prefect of the Praetorian Guard at Rome; and now you prosecute this man.' Isidorus: 'My Lord Caesar, what do you care for a three-obol Jew like Agrippa?' Claudius Caesar: 'What? You are the most insolent of men to speak . . .'[165]

[162] Cf. *CPJ* II 153 ll. 98–100; also Acts 17:6 and 24:5.
[163] Von Premerstein 1923: 23–4 (Tarquinius against and Aviolaus for); *CPJ* II p. 72 (Tarquinius for).
[164] *CPJ* II 156a ii.13–15. [165] *CPJ* II 156a ii.16–19; *CPJ* II 156b i.11–20.

The remainder of *CPJ* II 156b is fragmentary, but several words and phrases are recoverable. There are two mentions of the temples of the imperial cult (ii.6, ii.18). Isidorus is presumably referring to the Jews' refusal to sacrifice to the emperor. Isidorus then tells Claudius:

'I am brought here [or 'led away to death'?], a gymnasiarch of Alexandria, fifty-six years old, a Greek . . . an orator . . .' and with his right hand . . . he threw off his cloak . . .[166]

Isidorus is then led away in the robes of a gymnasiarch, with Claudius repeating his warning that Isidorus must not abuse his friend (ii.19–22). The sense of these lines become clear when we compare them to a similar scene from another *Acta Alexandrinorum* story, *CPJ* II 159 (see below pp. 93, 94).

The trial continues in *CPJ* II 156d, after a lacuna of unknown length. Isidorus, evidently recalled in the missing section, is now joined by Lampon, with whom he shares several dramatic asides. He states that his fatherland has chosen him as ambassador (i.1), but the story continues to lead up to the eventual execution:

Lampon to Isidorus: 'I have looked upon my death . . .'
Claudius Caesar: 'Isidorus, you have killed many friends of mine.'
Isidorus: 'I merely obeyed the orders of the king who was then ruling. So too I should be willing to denounce anyone you wish.'

Isidorus' excuse that he was merely showing his loyalty to the emperor Gaius and offer to serve Claudius in a similar way have precedents.[167] Because they do not present Isidorus in the most heroic light, they may even preserve the real reason for the trial. Isidorus' audacious offer annoys Claudius, prompting the following exchange:

Claudius Caesar: 'Isidorus you really are the son of an actress!'
Isidorus: 'I am neither a slave nor the son of an actress, but a gymnasiarch of the glorious city of Alexandria. But you are a cast-off son of the Jewess Salome!'

Lampon urges Isidorus to stop, stressing the futility of continuing to argue with Claudius: 'Lampon to Isidorus: "We might as well give in to a crazy king."' Claudius orders that the Alexandrians be led away to execution.[168] Another Alexandrian ambassador, Appian, states that Isidorus and Lampon

[166] *CPJ* II 156b ii.7–10. See note in App. 1, pp. 188–9.
[167] Cf. Tac. *Ann.* 13.43; the prosecutor Suillius also claimed that he had simply obeyed the previous emperor.
[168] *CPJ* II 156d ll. 1–17.

were executed along with a certain Theon.[169] Other stories referring to something happening in Claudius' reign may also confirm their deaths.[170]

These versions of the trial are presented in the form of trial minutes (*acta*). However, the numerous parallels between the trial and other *Acta Alexandrinorum* stories suggest that in its current form it is not a verbatim copy of a document.[171] The story of Isidorus and Lampon's execution for political intrigue is permeated by anti-Jewish and anti-Claudian sentiments and pervaded by Alexandrian Greek propaganda. The trial is depicted as highly unfair, just as Philo had portrayed his meeting with Gaius. The verdict is a foregone conclusion and the emperor will not even listen to Isidorus' account of his city's suffering. The anti-Jewish overtones are so frequent and pervasive that they become thematic to the account. Isidorus is opposed by a Jew, Agrippa. Agrippa is perhaps described as a member of a valueless race, if the term 'three-obol' is to be taken as meaning worthless.[172] Isidorus implies that, from an Alexandrian Greek point of view, it was worse to be the cast-off son of a Jewess than the son of an actress (i.e. prostitute). We find in *CPJ* II 156c the claim that the Jews wish to 'stir up the entire world' and assertions that the Jews' lack of culture should make them liable to pay the poll tax.

The writer portrays Claudius in a negative manner. Claudius is a tyrant who has prejudged the case, and will not even listen to the arguments of Isidorus. He is a 'deranged king' to the Greeks, just as Gaius was a mad emperor to Philo and the Jews. He also executes the two Alexandrians. The 'cast-off son of the Jewess Salome' remark would make more sense addressed to Agrippa but is clearly meant for Claudius. Mark Antony was Claudius' maternal grandfather, and the implication of the retort may be that Claudius cannot be the legitimate heir of Mark Antony because he sides with the Alexandrian Jews instead of the Greeks. The remark may be an example of contemporary humour which would have amused an Alexandrian Greek audience and may simply reflect that Claudius and Agrippa were born around the same time and grew up together in the imperial household.[173] The stories portray the emperor abandoning the Alexandrian Greeks and siding firmly with the Jews, although, as Claudius' letter to the Alexandrians shows, this was hardly the case (see pp. 10–24).

[169] *CPJ* II 159b iv.6–7. [170] *CPJ* II 157 iv.18; *CPJ* II 158a iv.13.

[171] These parallels are discussed on pp. 84–96.

[172] Alternatively this could preserve some contemporary humour concerning Agrippa's poverty, which led to him borrowing money from Philo's brother, Alexander, in the AD 30s. Joseph. *AJ* 18.159; cf. 18.163 on his continuing financial problems.

[173] As Joseph. *AJ* 18.165 reports. Salome was actually Agrippa's grandmother. His mother Berenice was friends with Antonia, Claudius' mother (Joseph. *AJ* 18.143, 156, 165).

The most prevalent theme in these stories is the Alexandrian nationalism. Isidorus' strong association with his fatherland is emphasised throughout the story. He is referred to as an ambassador, and calls himself 'gymnasiarch of the glorious city of Alexandria'. Although Philo mentions that Lampon held this office (see pp. 16–17), he does not say that Isidorus did, and the author may have invented this detail to emphasise further Isidorus' close connections with Alexandria. Isidorus dramatically throws off his cloak and the fact that he is later led away to execution in the robes of a gymnasiarch suggests that he demands to die in his robes of office and that the request is granted. This scene recurs in another *Acta Alexandrinorum* story.[174] The symbolism is clear. Isidorus was executed as a representative of Alexandria, and, in executing him, Claudius was showing his hostility towards the city. Whereas the first-century AD 'documentary' responses, such as *CPJ* II 150 and *P.Oxy*. XLII 3021, show an attempt to construct a case against the Jews, with the exception of *CPJ* II 156c, the authors of the trial of Isidorus make little attempt to do so. Instead the accounts focus on the vitriolic exchanges between Isidorus and the emperor and on glorifying the deaths of the Alexandrian heroes.

The clear signs of later reworking also show that the *Acta Isidori* are primarily literary compositions. The emperor, for example, was not referred to as 'Olympian' (*CPJ* II 156a ii.25) or 'king' until the third century AD.[175] The reference to the 'three-obol' Agrippa may also be an example of later editing. Previous solutions to explain the significance of this obscure word are not very convincing.[176] While it may simply mean 'worthless', or refer to Agrippa's financial difficulties, it is hard to disassociate the mention of a Jew and a financial sum in the period when our copies were made from a reference to the Jewish tax, which was imposed in the Flavian period. All Jews had to pay three *denarii* to Rome, two of which they had previously sent to the Temple in Jerusalem and one of which they had previously donated as a gift to the priests (the so-called *terumot*), which could explain the reference to a 'three-obol/thruppenny bit Jew'.[177] The stories of Isidorus' trial incorporate the same themes and language present in other *Acta Alexandrinorum* stories set under later emperors, suggesting some rewriting and adaptation of earlier material. The story of a brave Alexandrian boldly representing his city while facing a hostile emperor had clearly become a standard typology by the third century AD. Isidorus acts and sounds like other Alexandrian heroes. Claudius acts and sounds like the other Roman emperors in this literature. By the late second–early

[174] Cf. *CPJ* II 159b ii.14–iii.7. [175] Musurillo 1954: 132; *CPJ* II p. 81 n. 5.
[176] *CPJ* II p. 77 n. 18 lists the suggestions. [177] See Alon 1984: 64–70.

third century the basic story line of the *Acta Alexandrinorum* stories had therefore become very standardised and the characters had become stock caricatures.

The scant regard for history and chronology in the stories also shows them to be 'literary' rather than 'documentary'. Although the writers would like to ascribe Naevius Macro's death to the machinations of Isidorus, it is difficult to see how this could be the case. It is not historically implausible that Isidorus acted as an accuser against Macro, in the same way as he did against Flaccus.[178] However, Macro committed suicide early in AD 38, a time when Isidorus was presumably busy stirring up anti-Jewish feeling in Alexandria.[179] Philo would surely have mentioned the incident as further evidence of Isidorus' malicious nature. Macro was dead before he took up the prefecture of Egypt, yet he is designated in the text as 'Prefect of Egypt'.[180] While Isidorus participated in the downfall of Flaccus, the writers attempted erroneously to assign to him the death of a second prefect. We can also compare the portrayal of Theon in the stories copied in this period. According to Claudius in *CPJ* II 156a i.19, Isidorus was responsible for Theon's death. However, in other *Acta Alexandrinorum* stories Theon features alongside Balbillus as an Alexandrian ambassador, and another Alexandrian hero, Appian, places Theon alongside Isidorus and Lampon as those Alexandrians executed by Claudius.[181] By the third century the traditions had become so diverse that it was unclear who had killed Theon, and different writers could tell the same story of the Alexandrian embassy to Claudius emphasising the role of different heroes, Isidorus and Lampon, or Balbillus and Theon.

However, it would be wrong to dismiss the story of Isidorus' trial as baseless literary fantasy. Despite the obvious reworking and the literary characteristics, these stories do incorporate contemporary material and arguments. The third-century writers of the *Acta Isidori* would be unlikely, for example, to invent the dates, the setting, and the two senators, Tarquinius and Aviolaus, who appear to be historical personages, no matter how garbled their names are. Sections of the *Acta Isidori* also take the form of first-century AD trial records by, for example, naming a speaker but omitting a verb of speaking (e.g. 'Claudius Caesar: "Say nothing . . ."' etc.). While this does not necessarily mean that sections of the trial were based on official records, it does suggest that some sections were originally written in the first century AD.

[178] See p. 16. [179] Schwartz 1982: 191 dates the fall of Macro to *c.* January AD 38.

[180] Dio 59.10.6 is the only source to preserve the tradition that Gaius appointed Macro as prefect of Egypt.

[181] *BKT* IX 64; *CPJ* II 159b iv.5–7.

CONCLUSIONS

There had been stories of Alexandrian embassies to Rome and stories of Alexandrian ambassadors dying in Rome before.[182] However, none of them generated the amount or range of documentary and literary responses which these embassies to Gaius and Claudius did. The Alexandrian Greeks expected to persuade Gaius to adopt their views on the controversial issues which caused the Graeco-Jewish violence in Alexandria; the Alexandrian Jews feared the worst. However, Claudius' accession led to what Philo perhaps describes as a 'reversal of fortune' for both embassies. He adopted a more neutral stance than Gaius and executed two prominent Alexandrian Greeks for their roles in court intrigues during Gaius' reign. Although it was not the primary cause of their deaths, Isidorus and Lampon were heralded as victims who gave up their lives defending their city's rights against the Jews, and a new and popular literary genre was born.

Initially the embassies inspired the circulation of 'documents' about the events, such as Nemesion's version of the letter of Claudius to the Alexandrians and the source used by Josephus, which appear to have been amended to emphasise the relative successes of both embassies. 'Documents' recording the speeches of ambassadors and the minutes of the reception of the embassies continued to be copied and circulated and also amended. As I have argued above, *CPJ* II 150 must be heavily abbreviated and the author of *P.Oxy*. XLII 3021 betrays his pro-Greek sympathies by minimising the role of the Jewish embassy. Several ambassadors, such as Apion, Chaeremon and Philo, wrote accounts about the embassies. If Apion is indeed the source of Josephus' later account, then some accounts appear to have highlighted the successes of the embassies. Others, most notably that of Philo, instead highlighted their total and utter failure. In this way Philo produces a construct similar to that used in the *Acta Alexandrinorum* stories, in which his embassy bravely faces a hostile emperor who has sided with their enemy and is on the brink of executing them.

The traditions continued to develop and evolve for the next two centuries. Josephus, writing in the late first century AD, amended Philo's account by portraying the embassies meeting Gaius as a battle between the two leading ambassadors, Philo and Apion, which Philo lost. By the third century AD the stories were still being copied and amended but had

[182] E.g. an embassy of one hundred citizens led by Dio to plead to the Senate against Ptolemy XII Auletes' restoration to the throne in 58 BC was murdered, apparently by Auletes, although Romans, such as Caelius, were allegedly involved; Dio 39.13–14; Strabo 17.1.11; Cic. *Cael*. 10.23–5; *Har. resp*. 34.

become influenced by other stories of subsequent Alexandrian embassies to Rome and appear to have been updated to ensure that they remained relevant to the contemporary reader. Historical accuracy was no longer important to some writers and the traditions were diverse, anachronistic, and occasionally contradictory. Historical characters were transformed into stock caricatures. There is little to distinguish either Isidorus or Claudius from the other Alexandrian martyrs or emperors in other *Acta Alexandrinorum* stories. These later copies show a conscious effort to adapt the earlier traditions to produce the same essential trial scene, showing the Alexandrian heroes bravely opposing tyrannical Roman emperors and the Jews on behalf of their fatherland.

Although I have discussed the responses under the headings of 'documentary' and 'literary' texts, many of the traditions do not neatly fall into either of these categories. The 'documentary' copies of Claudius' letter appear to be excerpted, abbreviated and amended, making it difficult to classify them as 'documents'. Apion's history contained arguments used in his prosecution speech, and Philo composed a literary invective against Gaius which purports to record the actual words spoken at his meeting with the Jewish embassy. The trial scenes in the *Acta Alexandrinorum* stories are presented in the form of documents, but must be classified as literature due to their fictional elements. The contemporary references in the *Acta Alexandrinorum* stories suggest that they contain material based upon first-century AD sources, perhaps the minutes of the proceedings (*acta*) or the reports of ambassadors. If official documents do lie behind these stories (on which see pp. 99–112), it could be argued that, in amending their documents, the authors of the *Acta Alexandrinorum* were treating them in the same way as Nemesion and Josephus treated the letter of Claudius to the Alexandrians.

CHAPTER 3

The Acta Alexandrinorum: *Augustus to the Severans*

INTRODUCTION

The term *Acta Alexandrinorum* has been extended to cover a wide range of 'documentary' and 'literary' texts which concern the politics of Alexandria under Roman rule. Among these writings are a core group which conform to the definition of the *Acta Alexandrinorum* proper given in chapter 1: capital trials of Alexandrians citizens in the imperial court reported in the form of minutes. I refer to the other similar literary forms as *Acta* related literature. The *Acta Alexandrinorum* proper and *Acta* related literature range from apparently verbatim copies of documents through historical writings to literary compositions similar to novels.

In this chapter I will list, survey and discuss the *Acta Alexandrinorum* and *Acta* related literature. I have divided the texts into categories for ease of discussion, although some texts could legitimately be placed into more than one of these. I begin at what should be the 'documentary' end of the spectrum of these writings, examining copies of official documents, 'documents' and 'literature' inspired by imperial visits to Alexandria, and reports of Alexandrian embassies to Rome. I end at the 'opposite' end of the spectrum with the three types of trial scenes commonly associated with this literature: the 'trials' of prefects and the trials of Alexandrians set firstly in Alexandria and secondly in Rome. This latter group includes the *Acta Alexandrinorum* proper. In practice the divide between 'literary' and 'documentary' texts is not so neat, as many of the 'documents' discussed below exhibit literary characteristics, while conversely the literary texts are cased in documentary form. The divide between the *Acta Alexandrinorum* proper and the *Acta* related literature is equally problematic, as many examples of the latter share common traits with some of the former. Whilst surveying the 'literary' texts which have a documentary veneer, I will be examining the extent to which this veneer provides proof of a documentary basis for the text or is simply a literary device to add an air of

authenticity to pieces of imaginative fiction which feature historical events and characters.

official 'documents': imperial letters and official edicts

Several papyri preserve apparently verbatim copies of official letters and edicts. Such documents, which include imperial letters and edicts of prefects, were archived in Alexandria and were accessible to the general populace, who could copy them for their private use.[1] In chapter 2 I questioned the accuracy of two such copies of official documents, at least one of which was made and used by a non-Alexandrian inhabitant of the *chora* who was not directly affected by the contents. Rather than copying the letter of Claudius to the Alexandrians, Nemesion of Philadelphia apparently amended and excerpted sections of the original document, or copied an already 'improved' version, which may have been circulated around the *chora* as a form of literature. Nonetheless, despite the improvements and the purpose for which the letter was used, it belongs to the 'documentary' end of the spectrum. On the other hand, the letter of Gaius to the Alexandrians embedded within the story of an Alexandrian embassy to Gaius is heavily abbreviated into just a few lines and probably altered to meet the requirements of the story. Despite its form, this letter belongs much nearer the 'fictional' end of the scale; it may even be a literary creation.

Many of the official documents preserved on papyri are probably genuine, accurate copies, made soon after the original document was published. Documents, such as imperial letters, were frequently circulated around the Egyptian *chora*. *SB* XII 11012 is a copy of a letter of Nero to Ptolemais Euergetis, the urban centre of the Arsinoite nome, written in response to an embassy of at least six men who went to Rome to congratulate Nero on his accession. This document served a practical purpose, enabling the owner to prove that Nero had confirmed the existing status and privileges of the 6,475 men of the Arsinoite ruling class, as Claudius had also done at the beginning of his reign. It is more difficult to explain the presence of imperial letters to Alexandria in the *chora*. Although some may have belonged to Alexandrian citizens living in the *chora*, others were the possessions of native Egyptians who were interested in events in Alexandria and were not reading them simply for practical reasons.

[1] See Haensch 1992: 209–317. The accessibility of documents is further discussed below pp. 99–112.

P.Oxy. XLII 3020 col. i preserves part of a letter of Augustus to the Alexandrians written in response to his meeting with an Alexandrian embassy in 10–9 BC. The opening formula of the letter and the date clause are typical of those found in other extant letters of Augustus, differing only in the address to the *demos* of the city rather than the 'archons, council and *demos*' because Alexandria had no council in this period.[2] Little remains of the rest of the letter: 'The envoys whom you sent came to me in Gaul and delivered your commissions and also informed me of the things which seem to have aggrieved you in previous years . . .' The grievances of the Alexandrians and Augustus' response are not preserved, but the former is hinted at in the fragmentary second column of the papyrus. The owner of this papyrus was interested in more than just Augustus' response, because he copied the minutes of the meeting of the embassy with Augustus in col. ii.[3]

PUG I 10 preserves part of a letter of Nero to the Alexandrians and was copied onto the verso of a first-century AD account. Nero's titulature is accurately recorded. In the remainder Nero delivers a verdict on issues which have been raised in the letters of a certain Potamon. This Potamon could be a relation of an ambassador mentioned in Claudius' letter, Pasion son of Potamon, or a Neronian official who had held the positions of *strategos* of the city, exegete and *hypomnematographos* by AD 58:[4] '. . . concerning Potamon son of Bokkas and his sons . . . I have often heard from his letters concerning . . . I maintain that, having judged as a valid command . . . my decision . . . and of the younger Potamon when they became . . .' The letter ends with the statement that it was displayed (or perhaps read out) publicly in the Alexandrian *agora*.

P.Oxy. XLII 3022 preserves the opening part of a letter of Trajan to the Alexandrians, written in response to an Alexandrian embassy sent to congratulate him on his accession and to receive his confirmation that the rights and privileges of the city would be upheld. Trajan confirms the benefactions that his divine father Nerva conferred on the Alexandrians early in his reign:

> I too, having a personal feeling for you, commended you firstly to myself, then also to my friend and prefect Pompeius Planta, in order that he might see with every care to your undisturbed tranquillity and your food-supply and your communal and individual rights.

The date clause states that the letter was written when Trajan held the tribunician power for second time (between 9 October and December 98),

[2] E.g. *GC* 6–7 (letters of Augustus to Cnidos and Sardis).
[3] See p. 69 on this text. [4] *P.Oxy.* XLIX 3463.

a surprisingly long time after Trajan came to power on 28 January AD 98.[5] The embassy must therefore have travelled to Germany to meet Trajan, as he did not return to Rome until the autumn of AD 99. Trajan's sentiments towards Alexandria are comparable with those of other emperors on their accessions.[6] The letter therefore looks genuine, despite an error made by the copyist in Trajan's titulature. Trajan is described simply as 'consul', although he first held the consulship in AD 91, and would have described himself as 'consul for the second time' in the original letter.

P.Oxy. LXVII 4592 is a copy of a letter written by a newly acclaimed emperor to the Alexandrians:

> . . . Alexandrians . . . your goodwill towards me . . . you continue keeping in your breasts the same(?) disposition. With good fortune, I am coming to you, having been elected emperor by the very noble soldiers. Being auspiciously about to come to power among you and in particular having begun with you in the exercise of conferring benefits, [I will bestow (or 'have bestowed')] as much as it is just to bestow on my paternal city . . .

The reference to Alexandria as his 'paternal city' suggests that the author is Avidius Cassius, who was born in Alexandria in AD 130 during the prefecture of his father, Heliodorus, and attempted to usurp power in a revolt which lasted just over three months in AD 175.[7] There is nothing to suggest that this text is anything other than a copy of a genuine letter, although it could have been copied many years afterwards.[8] The sentiments expressed in Cassius' letter are very similar to those expressed a century earlier in the copy of Vespasian's speech to the Alexandrians.[9] A badly damaged copy of a letter of Gordian III to the Alexandrians also survives, regarding a new tax, perhaps on the cancellation of contracts.[10] *P.Oxy.* XII 1407 contains four very fragmentary imperial documents dating from AD 258 to the reign of Aurelian, the third of which is an imperial letter, perhaps addressed to the Alexandrians.

Another group of apparently genuine, verbatim copies of documents are edicts of prefects announcing imperial accessions. *P.Oxy.* VII 1021, a small scrap of papyrus written in a small cursive hand of the first century AD, announces Claudius' death and Nero's accession. The numerous corrections

[5] But cf. the time it took Claudius to reply to an embassy sent to congratulate him on his accession.
[6] E.g. Claudius (*CPJ* II 153); Vespasian (*SB* VI 9528); the usurper Avidius Cassius (*P.Oxy.* LXVII 4592).
[7] Bowman 1970: 20–6. On Cassius' revolt see Dio 72.17, 22.1–30.4; SHA *Marc.* 24.5–25.2; *Avid. Cass. passim*; Birley 1987: 184–93. On Marcus' subsequent visit to Alexandria see SHA *Marc.* 26.1–3; see also the copy of Cassius' accession edict (below p. 52) and a 'prophecy' regarding the usurpation on p. 123.
[8] The *editio princeps* dates the hand to the late second–early third century AD.
[9] See p. 62.
[10] *SB* XX 15145; see Lewis and Stephens 1991: 169–76; Cowey 2000: 246.

and modifications and the repetitive way that Nero's accession is announced may suggest that the text is a draft of an accession edict. The comparison of Nero with the Alexandrian deity Agathos Daemon suggests that it was based on a version which emanated from the prefect in Alexandria: 'The expectation and hope of the world has been declared emperor, the Good Spirit (Agathos Daemon) of the world and the source of all good things, Nero, has been declared emperor.' The edict also announces a public celebration. People are to give thanks to the gods and to wear garlands in Nero's honour.

In *P.Oxy.* LV 3781, dated to 25 August AD 117, the prefect Martialis officially informs the *strategoi* of Hadrian's accession and declares festivals. Trajan died on 8 August AD 117. The next day Hadrian's adoption was announced and on 11 August news of Trajan's death was circulated around the empire.[11] One celebration was a play that took place in the district of Apollonopolis–Heptakomias marking Trajan's deification and Hadrian's accession. The following extracts come from a partially preserved scene from this play:

> Apollo: 'Having just mounted aloft with Trajan in my chariot of white horses, I come to you, people . . . to proclaim the new ruler Hadrian, whom all things serve on account of his virtue and the genius of his divine father.'
>
> The people: 'Let us make merry, let us kindle our hearts in sacrifice, let us surrender our souls to laughter . . .'[12]

P.Amst. I 27 is a copy of an edict issued by the prefect Calvisius Statianus proclaiming Cassius' accession during his attempted usurpation:

> [Gaius Calvisius Sta]tianus prefect of Egypt says: '[Every person] shall celebrate on the occasion of the accession to the throne of [our] Lord [the eternal] Emperor Caesar Gaius Avidius [Cassius, of] all [men] the most conspicuous [benefactor] and all the gods [will] forever keep him unharmed [and unconquered] for us for the . . .'

Cassius was presumably a 'conspicuous' benefactor due to the role he had played as governor of Syria in suppressing the revolt of the Boukoloi. *BGU* II 646 contains a copy of a prefect's letter to the Alexandrians announcing Pertinax's accession, which was subsequently sent to the *strategoi* in the Arsinoite nome. An edict of the prefect announces the accession of Maximinus Thrax.[13] Another text preserves the covering letter of an accession edict for Gordian I and II.[14] These texts served a practical purpose by advertising the new dating formulae to local magistrates, but their presence in the

[11] Dio 69.1–4; SHA *Hadr.* 4.4–10. [12] *P.Giss.Lit.* 4.4. [13] *SB* I 421. [14] *P.Oxy.* LI 3607.

chora may also reveal a great interest in what was happening in the imperial court.

There are several other copies of official documents on papyri whose presence is more difficult to explain than these imperial letters to the Alexandrians. First *P.Köln* VI 249, from the Fayum, is written in a hand of the late first century BC–early first century AD and contains a partial copy of Augustus' funeral oration for Agrippa, which he delivered in the Roman forum, in Latin, in 12 BC.[15] There are several peculiarities of translation in the text (e.g. *Olympiada* for *quinquennium*), but these are problems of translation, and cast no serious doubts on the authenticity of the text. This text shows that a speech made in Rome could be copied verbatim and circulated around the empire, under certain circumstances. In this particular case the document may have been centrally distributed, with Augustus wanting to advertise the death and achievements of his loyal friend and general Agrippa. This text may even provide a model for Tiberius circulating the *SC de Cn. Pisone* and the eulogies of Germanicus, which are preserved on tablets from Spain.[16] In the latter text the Senate proposes to inscribe eulogies to Germanicus made by Tiberius and Drusus (*Tab.Siar*. ll. 11–19), which promote the status of the imperial princes. There may also have been some dynastic ideology conveyed in this oration, as Agrippa was also the father to Augustus' two grandsons and 'heirs'.[17]

The second and third texts may be examples of school texts for training scribes.[18] *C.Pap.Lat.* 238, a fragmentary text from the Fayum written in Latin in a hand of the late first century AD, purports to be a copy of a letter of Domitian to Maximus, prefect of Egypt, probably L. Laberius Maximus, who held this office in AD 82–3.[19] Domitian urges his prefect ('dear Maximus') to hurry to his side in Rome to take up a promotion:

> I have not been satisfied to crown your distinguished career with the prefecture [of Egypt], but [when] I transferred Julius [Ursus] into the most honourable order [when he made use of his own entreaties] and had long been desirous [of the transfer], I immediately considered your most devoted [loyalty and industry] and have made you colleague [and partner] of [. . . Fu]scus . . .

The letter appears to announce Maximus' promotion to the praetorian prefecture as a colleague of Cornelius Fuscus, who is attested in this office

[15] Dio 54.28.3–4.
[16] See Rowe 2002 on the *Tabulae Siarensis* and *Hebana*. On the *SC de Cn. Pisone* see p. 108.
[17] See p. 107. [18] On such school texts see Cribiore 1996 and 2005.
[19] On the text see Körtenbeutel 1940; Stein 1940: 51–60; Wilcken 1941: 167–8; Syme 1954: 116–19.

in AD 83.[20] Julius Ursus was an ex-Prefect of Egypt who went on to hold the praetorian prefecture, and was then evidently admitted to the Senate (the most honourable order).[21] The consul lists, which show that [-]rsus was suffect consul in *c*. May AD 84, may confirm this.[22] Although the letter suggests that he was desirous of the move, Ursus may well have been moved aside, his displacement to the Senate compensated for by a suffect consulship.[23] The first line of the text declares that it is a 'copy of a letter' (*exemplar codicillorum*), implying that this is a verbatim copy of the original document. The form and presence of the letter suggest that it is a school text. It would be odd for Maximus to distribute a letter throughout Egypt to advertise his promotion which omits the salutations of the emperor and his actual name, and equally odd for a Latin-speaking villager in the Fayum to take such a lively interest in the further careers of two ex-Prefects of Egypt.[24]

The third text, *P.Fay.* 19, from Bachkias in the Fayum, purports to be a deathbed letter of Hadrian to his heir, Antoninus Pius. It is almost certainly a school text, as the first five of the fifteen lines are copied in a less accomplished hand beneath. Hadrian writes that he is being released from life, and is going to give Antoninus an account of his life. Only the preliminary stages of the account survive, showing Hadrian comparing his own age with the ages reached by his natural parents. The sentiments in the letter are similar to those in a poem allegedly written by Hadrian on his deathbed, reported in the *Historia Augusta*, and have been connected to a letter reported by Dio, in which Hadrian expressed his despair at desiring to die, yet being unable to.[25] It has been suggested that *P.Fay.* 19 is an extract of Hadrian's autobiography.[26] Alternatively, if genuine, the letter could have been distributed by Antoninus in order to support his claims for legitimacy, although the theme of Hadrian's deathbed communication to Antoninus would have been a popular topic for declamation.

[20] E.g. Juvenal 4.111. Körtenbeutel suggests that Maximus was elevated to the consulship of AD 84 alongside Pedianus Fuscus, but this does not satisfactorily explain the distinction within the letter between the Senate and the position which Maximus will take up.

[21] Ursus' prefecture of Egypt has been placed variously in AD 79–80, 83–4, 84–5 (Bureth 1988: 480; Bastianini 1988: 507). On the basis of this letter, he was probably prefect in AD 79–80.

[22] McCrum and Woodhead 1961: no. 56.

[23] Syme 1958: 635–6. Anecdotes in Dio (67.3.1 and 67.4.2) reveal tension between Domitian and Ursus.

[24] The only comparable example is *P.Hibeh*. II 215, an *epikrisis* certificate written between AD 70 and 130, which describes Tiberius Julius Alexander as Prefect of Egypt and Praetorian Prefect. But this information may simply indicate that Alexander was appointed prefect in Alexandria shortly before he gave this judgement. Turner 1954: 61.

[25] SHA *Hadr.* 25.9; Dio 69.17.2–3.

[26] E.g. Bollansée 1994: 279–302.

The fourth, *P.Bub.* I 4, contains a rather bizarre and fragmentary 'copy' of a letter of Elagabalus in a composite roll made up from mainly administrative documents belonging to the *strategos* of the Bubastite nome in the fourth year of Elagabalus (AD 220–1), Aurelius Heraclides. Col. xxx is a copy of a letter of the prefect announcing the publication of an imperial letter.[27] This letter itself is 'copied' in Latin in col. xxix. It would appear to be addressed to the Roman senate. There is mention of a marriage (l. 2), a woman who wants to give a son to the emperor (l. 4), the praetorian guard (l. 7), and the emperor's bedroom (l. 8). The text could refer to the adoption of Alexander Severus in AD 221 but is more likely to refer to Elagabalus' infamous marriage to a vestal virgin, Julia Aquilia Severa. The marriage was widely disapproved of and the praetorians forced Elagabalus to divorce his wife. The restored text refers to this imposed divorce:

> For she, who wished [to give] to you a son [of mine] as a fitting (or future) emperor and to win favour for herself through her honourable character, and through [whom], as it behoves me to pass over the rest in silence, my most valiant and loyal [soldiers, including the] praetorians . . . [have found(?)] me [able to refuse nothing they ask(?)], shall not remain in my bed-chamber.

The *strategos*' interest in the letter may have been purely practical. Elagabalus may perhaps have intended to levy wedding 'gifts' from his subjects for his subsequent remarriage to Annia Faustina, which immediately followed this divorce. The edict of the prefect announcing the publication of the letter and the fact that the letter is written in Latin would suggest that it is a verbatim copy of an imperial letter. However, it is implausible that any emperor would have allowed the publication of a letter which showed him to be so clearly at the mercy of his soldiers. It is likely that the content of the original letter has been edited and that it was possibly kept for the *strategos*' entertainment. Stories of Elagabalus' illicit marriage and sexual deviance were certainly popular in Egypt. Two astrological texts use unflattering formulae to refer to Elagabalus' reign: one text mentions year *x* 'of the impious little Antoninus' (the exact opposite of 'Pius Maximus'), and another 'of Antoninus ὁ κόρυφος' (perhaps translating as 'the catamite' or 'virgin raper').[28] A list of kings and emperors simply calls Elagabalus 'the other' ('homosexual').[29] The Alexandrians are frequently attested to have mocked their rulers by reversing their epithets, and Elagabalus' unfortunate title may well have originated from Alexandrian literary traditions.[30]

[27] On this text see Rea: 1993a: 127–33.
[28] *P.Oxy.* XLVI 3298 l. 2, 3299. See Lukaszewicz 1992: 43–6; 1994b: 93.
[29] *P.Oxy.* XXXI 2551 l. 20.
[30] The Alexandrians called Ptolemy VIII 'malefactor' (Kakergetes) rather than 'benefactor' (Euergetes).

Other 'copies' of official documents, some of which are embedded in the *Acta Alexandrinorum* in the same way as the letter of Gaius to the Alexandrians, seem less genuine, less plausible and less satisfactory than some of those considered above. An imperial letter is cited in *P.Oxy.* XVIII 2177, which tells the story of the trial of Alexandrians and Athenians in the court of Trajan or Hadrian.[31] In this letter the emperor, whose titulature is incomplete and abbreviated, refers to ambassadors who have acted on behalf of their own city with the most learned Paulus, a character who appears in several of the *Acta Alexandrinorum* stories set in the second century AD.[32] The letter mentions 'recklessness', 'insolence', a rather reluctant sign of imperial goodwill to the city (Alexandria or Athens) and the description of the ambassadors as *philologoi* ('scholars'). The term is probably intended to be derogatory, the emperor showing his annoyance with the academics who were sent as ambassadors. It is hard to understand how citing such an antipathetic letter could have benefited the Alexandrian case, even if it assuaged the emperor's irritation, expressed later in the story, at non-Alexandrians appearing on embassies by proving that Paulus of Tyre had served as an ambassador before. The hostile nature of the letter suggests that it may have been revised and reworked to meet the requirements of the story, in which at least one ambassador faces execution, if indeed it was based on an official document and not fabricated.

A letter appears to be cited in *CPJ* II 158a, the story of the trial of Paulus and Antoninus, in the fragmentary col. v. There is perhaps a date clause in l. 11: '[year? of Hadrian(?)]us Caesar', and the addressee is perhaps Hadrian's first Prefect of Egypt [Ram]mius Martialis (l. 3). The letter may refer to the special judge who, according to an *Acta Alexandrinorum* story and a 'copy' of a prefectural edict, was sent to Alexandria in this period.[33] This letter may be connected to one mentioned in Petrus Patricus' epitome of Dio in which Hadrian quelled fighting in Alexandria by sending a strongly worded letter to the city: 'The Alexandrians had been rioting and nothing would make them stop until they received a letter from Hadrian rebuking them.'[34] However, it would appear to be substantially compressed and reworked in its current form.

[31] The *editio princeps*, assuming that this was a genuine document, suggested that Trajan was the most likely author on the basis that the erudite Hadrian could not have written such a letter. The references to Paulus and the 'scholars' in the letter may indicate that it is connected to the Alexandrian embassy of *CPJ* II 157. *P.Oxy.* XVIII 2177 and *CPJ* II 157 are discussed below pp. 86, 91–2, 95, 126–7.

[32] *CPJ* II 157, 158.

[33] v. 9: [πε]μφθεὶς ὑπό; cf. *P.Mil.Vogl.* II 47 iii.16: ὑπὸ Καίσαρος . . . πεμφθέντα. See below pp. 76–7, 88–9 on these texts.

[34] Dio 69.8.1a (Petrus Patricus *Exc. Vat.* 108).

P.Bon. 15 is a thin strip from the middle of a column of writing written in a hand of the third century. The text is headed by Caracalla's titulature and would appear to be a copy of an imperial letter or edict. The only firm evidence for the date is the *terminus post quem* provided by the epithet Arabicus, which Caracalla assumed in AD 213–14. The subject of the edict would appear to be Caracalla's 'massacre', suggesting a date of AD 215–16.[35] Caracalla mentions that he is angry (l. 4), and also mentions statues (l. 4) and something being burnt (l. 10). He may also perhaps refer to 'all f[oreigners]'(l. 6).[36] The heading of the text with Caracalla's full titulature gives it the appearance of a document. However, Caracalla's titulature is expressed oddly: '[Anto]ninus Pius, Ara[bicus] | Lucius Septimius S[everus]'. Between the two lines is an interlinear correction reading 'Adiabenicus Maximus'.[37] This titulature is significantly different from Caracalla's normal titulature of 'Parthicus Maximus, Britannicus Maximus, Germanicus Maximus', and is nowhere else attested among the hundreds of papyri and inscriptions bearing his name. This text would also be the only example of Caracalla being called 'Adiabenicus Maximus' during his lifetime. Caracalla was only ever called this posthumously.[38] *P.Bon.* 15 is therefore not a verbatim copy of an edict issued by Caracalla in AD 215, and was presumably written after Caracalla's death. The dubious titulature casts doubt on the authenticity of the contents of the text. *P.Bon.* 15 is therefore to some extent fictitious, despite its attempt to look like a contemporary document.

Another example of an 'improved' edict may be the last of three edicts of Caracalla preserved on a single piece of papyrus as *P.Giss.Lit.* 6.3. The edict starts with the words 'a further extract' implying that what follows, as well as what preceded it, may not be the complete verbatim text.[39] The text preserves extracts from an imperial order to expel all Egyptians from Alexandria, with a long list of exceptions. The content of the further extract is so unlike the normal tone of an official edict that it can plausibly be regarded as an interpolation. In the final section of the edict we find a crushing condemnation of Egyptian culture:

> The true Egyptians can easily be recognised among the linen weavers by their accent, or through their [obviously] alien appearance and dress. Moreover the way that they live, with their far from civilised manners, reveals them to be Egyptian peasants.

[35] See pp. 133–8.

[36] Perhaps πάντων ξ[ένων]. See pp. 77, 133–8 on the involvement of the *xenoi* in these events.

[37] See note in App. 1 pp. 182–3 and Shelton 1980: 179 on the restored titulature.

[38] E.g. by Elagabalus in *CIL* VIII 10267; Shelton 1980: 181.

[39] A slightly different version of the second decree on this papyrus (*P.Giss.Lit.* 6.2), the so-called 'Amnesty' decree, is preserved at Oxyrhynchus (*P.Oxy.* XXXVI 2755), showing that the official text was altered during copying.

This is far closer in tone to the *Acta Alexandrinorum* proper and other papyri which show a snobbish disdain for the Egyptians,[40] than to other official expulsion edicts which make provisions for foreigners to be present in Alexandria, such as the one issued by Vibius Maximus in AD 104:

> The house to house census having begun, it is essential for all those who are absent from their nomes, for whatever reason, to be summoned to their own hearths, so that they may complete the usual business of registration and apply themselves to the cultivation that concerns them. Knowing, however, that some of the people from the country are needed by our city [i.e. Alexandria], I desire all those who have a special reason for remaining here to register themselves before . . . Festus, *praefectus alae*.[41]

Caracalla's view of the Egyptians in *P.Giss.Lit.* 6.3 is also contradictory. Despite his condemnation of Egyptian culture he does admit that many Egyptians perform excellent services for the city. The edict emphasises the contrast between the useless, uneducated Egyptians and those 'good' Egyptians who benefit Alexandria with their presence, providing the city with vital services, by worshipping its god and improving themselves by immersing themselves in Hellenic culture. This strongly suggests that the edict was embellished by a copyist anxious to identify himself with the latter group.[42] The similarity in the language at the beginning and end of the edict adds credence to the idea that it has been improved:

> All Egyptians who are in Alexandria and particularly the peasants who have fled from elsewhere and can be easily recognised (εὐμαρῶς εὑρίσκεσθαι δύνανται) are by all means to be expelled . . . The true Egyptians can easily be recognised (ἐπιγεινώσκεσθαι δύνανται εὐμαρῶς).

P.Mil.Vogl. II 47 purports to be a 'copy' of a prefectural edict written in response to serious violence between Greeks and Jews in Alexandria. It was found in Tebtunis, a village in the Fayum, and is written in a hand of the second century AD. The text contains four columns of writing, although only the third and fourth are well preserved, and ends with an almost illegible date clause: 'year 19 of [Caesar?], Phaophi 16'.[43] From internal references to several Alexandrian ambassadors from *CPJ* II 157, which is

[40] See pp. 112–19.

[41] *Sel.Pap*. II 220 ll. 18–38; cf. *BGU* II 372, an edict from Sempronius Liberalis on 29 August AD 154 ordering all to return to their *idia* (referred to in *P.Fay*. 24). Caracalla, both as co-ruler with Severus and as sole emperor, had already issued similar edicts; cf. *P.Oxy.* XLVII 3364; Thomas 1975: 210–21; *SB* I 4284; *P.Westminster Coll.* 3; *P.Giss.Lit.* 6.2.

[42] See pp. 112–19 for further examples of upwardly mobile Hellenising Egyptians.

[43] See note in App. 1, p. 198.

set during Trajan's reign, the date would be the 14 October AD 115 and the prefect would be Rutilius Lupus.[44] The edict was written after the Romans had ended the violence and was directed against the Greeks who were continuing to make retaliatory attacks on the Jews. The fragmentary first two columns refer to an incident in the theatre and a triumphal procession, instigated by a certain Antonin[us]. The prefect is highly critical towards the 'few' Alexandrian Greeks who are persisting in attacking the Jews. He acknowledges that most of the troublemakers are slaves, but holds their masters responsible for their actions. The prefect announces that a special judge is to be sent by the emperor to punish those who are guilty of retaliatory violence, and urges order to be restored to the city:

> Let there be an end of people saying, some truthfully, some falsely, that they have been wounded and demand justice violently and unjustly. For it was not necessary to be wounded. Some of these mistakes could perhaps have had an excuse before the battle between the Romans and the Jews, but now however such courts of judgement are useless and have never before been permitted.

The date of the edict suggests that it refers to the Jewish Revolt of AD 115–17 and that there is some truth to the tradition reported by Eusebius' account, that the Alexandrian Greeks had decisively defeated the Jews in a pitched battle in the city.[45] The edict also shows that, as in AD 38 and 66, the Romans sided with the Alexandrian Greeks against the Jews when violence broke out in the city, but subsequently took steps to prevent the Greeks from continuing the violence.[46]

The edict has a documentary veneer although the date clause is not documentary in form, as Augustus was the only emperor to be referred to simply as 'Caesar' in official documents. There are considerable links of subject matter between this edict and an example of the *Acta Alexandrinorum* proper with a dramatic date in this period. The Alexandrian Greeks in *CPJ* II 158a and *BKT* IX 115 mention an edict of Lupus. Indeed in the former a memorandum (i.e. edict) of Lupus is cited 'in which [he ordered them to hand over] weapons and withdraw', which would aptly describe this edict.[47]

[44] For the date see Pucci 1989: 34.
[45] Euseb. *Hist. eccl.* 4.2.1–4.
[46] See below pp. 76–7, 88–9. The Greeks had apparently challenged Roman authority by breaking Jewish prisoners out of prison.
[47] *CPJ* II 158a iv.3–5. On these texts see pp. 76–7, 80, 88–9.

'documents' and 'literature' inspired by imperial visits to alexandria

During the Principate many emperors, imperial heirs and usurpers either visited the city of Alexandria or expressed their desire to visit. Visits are attested by Octavian (30 BC), Germanicus (AD 19), Vespasian (AD 69–70), Titus (AD 71), Hadrian (AD 130), Marcus Aurelius (AD 175), Avidius Cassius (AD 175), Severus (AD 199–200), Geta (AD 199–200), Caracalla (AD 199–200, 215–16) and perhaps Severus Alexander (*c.* AD 231–3). Gaius and Nero professed their intentions to visit the city.[48] These visits generated an enormous amount of documents and local literature, several pieces of which are similar in form, content and tone to the *Acta Alexandrinorum* proper, and some of which formed the basis of accounts in the mainstream histories of the Principate.

Some of the surviving local literature produced in response to imperial visits is cased in the form of documents. A private letter from Oxyrhynchus written on 29 April AD 71 mentions Titus' entry into Alexandria four days earlier and gives a name to one type of record, the ἄκτα τῶν τιμῶν.[49] The anonymous writer gives his friends Adrastus and Sparticus a brief description of Titus' movements in the city:

> And Lord Caesar entered on the second hour of the 30th. [He first went] to the camp [. . .] then to the Serapeum, and from the Serapeum to [the] *hippikos* [= Hippodrome?] . . .

He then informs his friends that when he sees them next they will know the ἄκτα τῶν τιμῶν of Titus' visit, which were presumably a documentary record of the honours given to Titus by the city, which the writer intended to access and copy for his friends.[50] Their interest in the record may not have been the honours themselves, but instead the petition presented to Titus on this occasion, which Josephus states was similar to the one that had been presented to Titus in Antioch.[51] The Antiochenes had enthusiastically greeted Titus, but 'their acclamations were accompanied by a running petition to expel the Jews from the city'. Titus refused both this and a request to remove the civic privileges of the Jews.[52]

Several papyri about the visits of Germanicus and Vespasian to Alexandria reveal the possible form that such ἄκτα τῶν τιμῶν could take. *P.Oxy.* XXV 2435 recto purports to be a verbatim record of speeches delivered by an Alexandrian exegete and by Germanicus on his entry into Alexandria

[48] See p. 18 on Gaius' projected visit; Suet. *Ner.* 19.
[49] *P.Oxy.* XXXIV 2725.
[50] See also pp. 108, 115.
[51] Joseph. *AJ* 12.121–4.
[52] Joseph. *BJ* 7.100–11, 116.

in AD 19.[53] The same writer later copied an account of Augustus meeting an Alexandrian embassy onto the verso of the papyrus.[54] The text begins with the Alexandrian exegete proclaiming that he has given the *imperator* Germanicus the two honorific decrees. The remainder of the text is taken up by a rather waffling, rhetorical speech by Germanicus, punctuated by favourable cries and applause from an enthusiastic Alexandrian crowd. Germanicus tries to quieten the crowd so that he can speak and asks them to wait until *after* he has spoken until they give their approval. His 'father' Tiberius has sent him to set in order several overseas provinces, a difficult command that has separated him from his family. He has come to Alexandria so that he might 'see the city'. He has found Alexandria 'brilliant', but expected no less from a city founded by Alexander the Great. The text breaks off with Germanicus referring to the warm reception which he has enjoyed.

Another 'documentary' text, *SB* I 3924, written in a semi-literary hand of the early first century AD, preserves two edicts issued by Germanicus during this visit. In the first Germanicus orders that no one, except his secretary Baebius, is to order requisitions for his visit.[55] The second edict refers to one of the honours given to Germanicus. It was issued in response to proclamations about Germanicus' divinity. Germanicus states that while he enjoys the goodwill shown towards him, he finds their shouts, which are only appropriate for his grandmother and father, 'the true saviour and benefactor of men', rather odious. Whatever merits Germanicus may have are due to Tiberius and Livia's divinity. If the Alexandrians do not obey him, he will not appear before them as often.

SB XVI 12255, of unknown provenance, written in a hand of the late first century AD, appears to record the honours granted to Vespasian on his entry into the city in AD 69 in the form of minutes.[56] In the text Vespasian is received by the prefect Tiberius Julius Alexander and an enthusiastic crowd in the Hippodrome, just outside the western gate of the city.[57] Alexander

[53] On his date of arrival see Weingärtner 1969: 64–7; Halfmann 1986: 169; Barnes 1989b: 251–2.

[54] See pp. 69–70.

[55] Baebius had also been involved in the organisation of Germanicus' games in AD 12 – Philo, *Alexander* 27.

[56] On this visit see Tac. *Hist*. 2.79, 4.81–2; Suet. *Vesp*. 6–7; Dio 66.8.1–9.2; Joseph. *BJ* 4.616–8; cf. also Philostr. *VA* 5.27–38.

[57] The frequent use of the vocative case (e.g. l.11, 15, 21), the phrase [εἰς] τὴν πόλιν, suggesting that someone was actually entering the city, and the participle ἀνατέλλων (on which see the note in App. I, p. 209) would suggest that Vespasian was personally present. It therefore seems unlikely that the content is Alexander's announcement of Vespasian's accession shortly after 1 July AD 69, which would give a scene comparable to Mucianus' proclamation to a crowd in the theatre at Antioch in Tac. *Hist*. 2.80.

and the crowd greet Vespasian in honorific terms, and the crowd gives its thanks to Alexander for the role he had played in Vespasian's accession. The words of Alexander, the crowd and Vespasian are all recorded in the form of minutes:

[Tiberius Alexander(?):] 'In health Lord Caesar [. . .] [. . . Vesp]a[s]ian, the one saviour and b[enefactor] . . . visiting(?) . . .'
[The crowd(?):] 'Guard him for us . . . Lord Augustus, benefactor, the [new] Ser[apis] . . . son of Ammon . . . we give thanks to Tiberius [Alexander] . . .'

In the remaining lines Vespasian returns their greeting:

The divine Caesar [said] (ἔ[φη]): 'In health . . .'

SB VI 9528, a small scrap from the Fayum written in a hand of the late first century, preserves part of a speech delivered by the newly acclaimed Vespasian to the Alexandrians. It was probably delivered soon after his entry into the city, perhaps at the occasion of *SB* XVI 12255:

[I am delighted to hear that] in accord with the decrees of the most sacred Senate and with the unanimity of the most loyal troops in respect to me [you] rejoice that I have assumed the care of [public affairs]. And I myself, men of Alexandria, maintaining from away back my exceptionally favourable disposition to your city, add to my former opinion the rationale of today's occasion, from which you ought to entertain the finest expectations. As I begin my speech . . .

These texts have the appearance of documents and the fact that they contain contemporary details could confirm their authenticity. The waffling nature of Germanicus' speech in *P.Oxy.* XXV 2435 recto suggests that it is a verbatim copy of an unprepared speech, which Germanicus was not expecting to have to deliver. Germanicus was thinking as he spoke, unnecessarily mentioning, for example, the names of all the relatives whom he was allegedly missing in order to allow himself time to think of what to say next. The enthusiasm with which he was apparently received is highly plausible. He was the first blood descendant of Mark Antony to enter the city and was heir apparent to the Roman Empire. The tone and language of Germanicus' edicts in *SB* I 3924 are similar to *P.Oxy.* XXV 2435 *recto*. The appellations used by the Alexandrian crowd in *SB* XVI 12255 are also reflected in the mainstream historical sources for Vespasian's reign. Vespasian received the epithet 'the one saviour and benefactor' on his entry to Rome.[58] The sentiments expressed in *SB* VI 9528 are typical of those expressed by a ruler to his subjects soon after his accession.[59] While Vespasian is being liberal

[58] Joseph. *BJ* 7.71. [59] E.g. Trajan in *P.Oxy.* XLII 3022.

with the truth when he states he had the backing of the Senate, he did have the support of the eastern legions and those in Egypt. The positive way in which Vespasian is referred to in these texts also indicates that they contain contemporary material, as he apparently became more unpopular during the latter stages of his visit.[60]

However, these 'documents' also have literary elements. While it would be possible for a scribe to record the actual words of Germanicus, Tiberius Alexander and Vespasian, it is unlikely that a large, excited crowd would cry out the same thing all in unison for a scribe to record neatly in the text.[61] *SB* XVI 12255 also appears to use the literary term ἔ[φη], which is never used in documents. The writer of *SB* XVI 12255 may also have drawn on the Serapis aretalogical literature in his record of Vespasian's entry into Alexandria.[62] While it would be apparently possible for the writers to access the ἄκτα τῶν τιμῶν of the visits and the actual text of Germanicus' edicts, there was no requirement for them to make exact copies. These 'documents' were apparently being circulated among friends as a form of literature, as the letter to Adrastus and Sparticus shows, fulfilling the need to know what had happened during the visits of these emperors and their heirs to Alexandria.

This need is also reflected in the number of documents and literature generated by imperial visits to Alexandria and Egypt. Hadrian spent several months in Alexandria and Egypt as part of his tour of the provinces in AD 130.[63] He was apparently favourably received in the city and took a particular interest in the Alexandrian Museum: 'At the Museum in Alexandria he posed numerous questions to the professors and, after posing them, supplied the answers himself.'[64] During the tour of the *chora* Hadrian's male companion Antinous drowned in the Nile on the 24 October AD 130, which led to the founding of the city of Antinoopolis six days later.[65]

Several pieces of the literature inspired by this visit are preserved on papyri or are alluded to in the mainstream sources for the Principate. The introductory narrative of a magical papyrus tells the story of Hadrian witnessing a 'spell of attraction' at Heliopolis.[66] A poet named Pancrates composed

[60] See p. 66.
[61] Although the Alexandrians' rhythmic chanting once greatly impressed Nero (Suet. *Ner.* 20).
[62] See pp. 67–8.
[63] On the visit and tour see Birley 1997: 235–58; Van Gronigen 1957: 253–6; Sijpesteijn 1969: 109–18; 1991: 89–90; Lewis 1993: 29. Bernand A. and E. 1960: nos. 28–31, and also perhaps 11–12, 32 and 60, were written on to the 'singing statue of Memnon' by members of Hadrian's entourage.
[64] SHA *Hadr.* 20.2.
[65] Dio 69.11.2–4; SHA *Hadr.* 14.5–7; Aur. Vict. *Caes.*14.5–7; Euseb. *Chron.* Hadrian year 13 (p. 200).
[66] *Pap.Graec.Mag.* IV 2441–621.

a poem about a hunt in which Hadrian and Antinous participated.[67] A prose work on papyrus discovered at Tebtunis, written in the early second century, was probably also offered to Hadrian in this period, as it elaborates on the Antinoan lotus, and compares it to other flowers named after beautiful youths, like Narcissus and Hyacinthus.[68] The Alexandrian poet Dionysius gained Hadrian's approval by referring to the river Rhebas, a river in Antinous' homeland, as 'the fairest that sweeps the earth' in his 'Guide to the inhabited world'.[69]

A series of documentary papyri recording legal decisions made by Severus and Caracalla during their visit to Alexandria and Egypt in AD 199–200 and by Caracalla in AD 215 were copied extensively. These *apokrimata* are addressed to private individuals and are rather laconic. There is no salutation, no preamble, and only the bare bones of the ruling are given.[70] Other imperial *responsa*, some of which were issued on other occasions and were addressed to communities, are much fuller.[71] The *apokrimata* often contain more than one decision. *P.Col.* VI 123, for example, contains thirteen subscripts on a variety of subjects. The fact that the same subscript is often preserved in different papyri shows that the decisions circulated widely around Egypt.[72] The decisions were used as legal precedents. *P.Flor.* III 382, for example, contains a petition of AD 222–3, which cites some Severan *apokrimata* among the array of precedents for immunity from liturgical duties.[73]

The imperial decisions were posted publicly in the *stoa* of the gymnasium in Alexandria.[74] Copies were made and circulated around the *chora*. However, it is not clear who collected and read these decisions, beyond lawyers and petitioners, for whom they served a practical purpose. In addition some *apokrimata*, such as the following example, are so laconic that they could have no practical value whatsoever without a copy of the accompanying petition: 'To Aurelius Artemidorus, Aurelius Anubion and the others: Obey the findings' (*P.Col.* VI 123 ll. 11–12 = *GC* 228). On the other hand,

[67] Sections are cited in Athenaeus 15.677d–f and in *P.Oxy.* VIII 1085 from early second-century AD Oxyrhynchus; cf. Birley 1997: 244.

[68] *P.Mil.Vogl.* I 20. This 18 × 18 cm fragment is from second-century AD Tebtunis. Other *consolationes* for Antinous are attested in Suda s.v. Mesomedes; cf. Lebek 1973: 101–37.

[69] Birley 1997: 252–3 and n. 38. Dionysius' poem is accessible in Brodersen 1994.

[70] E.g. *P.Oxy.* VII 1020; *BGU* I 267; *P.Stras.* I 22; *BGU* II 473; *P.Col.* VI 123; *P.Amherst.* II 63; *P.Oxy.* XII 1405; *P.Oxy.* XLIII 3105; *P.Flor.* III 382.

[71] *P.Aberd.* 15; *P.Oxy.* XLII 3018, 3019; *SB* IV 7366; *P.Mich.* IX 529; *P.Oxy.* LX 4068.

[72] E.g. the same decisions are preserved in *P.Amherst* II 63 ll. 1–6 and *P.Col.* VI 123 ll. 8–10.

[73] On the *apokrimata* see Westermann and Schiller 1954; Lewis 1978: 261–78; Williams 1974b: 86–103.

[74] See Haensch 1994: 487–546; see also Burkhalter 1992: 345–75 on the topography of the gymnasium.

some imperial decisions go into far too much detail. *P.Oxy.* XLII 3019 preserves excerpts from the minutes of a court hearing between Severus and an embassy from the Egyptians, that is the Greeks of an unspecified *metropolis*:

> Caesar took his seat in the court-house with his friends and those who had been summoned to the council and ordered that the envoys of the Egyptians, who were putting forward their common requests, should be called in.

The petition of the Egyptians is described in indirect speech and is followed by the decision of the emperor. Another decision records in direct speech the advice given to Caracalla on the matter at hand by a certain Lollianus, and his decision. This particular response is preserved in two papyri, which contain numerous textual differences, suggesting that the writers were not particularly concerned with copying the text accurately.[75] From the number of imperial decisions that have survived, it is unlikely that they were read by lawyers alone. Some may have been copied by people in the *chora* who were interested in what Severus and Caracalla were doing and saying during their visit to Egypt. These documentary texts, therefore, may have been circulated around Egypt as a form of literature.

Many traditions which appear to have developed locally in Alexandria as a direct result of an imperial visit to the city and which often depict the reigning emperor in a negative manner were included in the works of the mainstream writers of the Principate. Such traditions may have circulated in some kind of literary form in Alexandria before reaching the attention of these writers. We can see vestiges of the local traditions in the mainstream literary accounts concerning the visits of Germanicus, Vespasian, Titus, Caracalla and Severus Alexander to Alexandria.[76]

Germanicus' visit to Alexandria caused great controversy. Germanicus had acted unconstitutionally by entering the province without imperial authority, and both Tacitus and Suetonius imply that Tiberius' alleged involvement in the 'murder' of Germanicus was a result of the visit to Alexandria.[77] The story of a rift between Tiberius and Germanicus intensified by the Alexandrian visit is still accepted by some scholars, although other explanations have been proposed as to why Germanicus neglected to gain Tiberius' permission to enter Egypt.[78] The mainstream historical accounts reflect the traditions reported in the local responses to his visit. *P.Oxy.* XXV 2435 recto supports Tacitus' statement that, while Germanicus

[75] See p. 105. [76] The traditions about Caracalla are examined on pp. 133–8.
[77] Tac. *Ann.* 2.59, 3.16; Suet. *Tib.* 52.2–3.
[78] Weingärtner 1969: 40; Fishwick 1973: 255–6; Hennig 1972: 349–65; Thomas 1971: 236–7.

was sent to the eastern provinces with a *maius imperium* to resolve problems, he stopped off at Alexandria 'to look at antiquities'. He certainly did visit the main tourist sites in Egypt, but in Alexandria he did not act like a tourist and unwisely became embroiled in the politics of the city. He walked through the city in Greek dress, and to relieve a famine he opened the public granaries, lowering the price of wheat, although, according to Apion, he refused to issue grain to the Alexandrian Jews.[79] Tacitus also implies some sinister intent by adding that 'he adopted many practices popular with the multitude'.[80] This tradition may well have derived from contemporary literature and documents such as *P.Oxy.* XXV 2435 recto and *SB* I 3924, which reveal that Germanicus was proclaimed a god in Alexandria and addressed as *imperator* during his visit.

Dio and Suetonius include negative, Alexandrian traditions about Vespasian's visit to the city. Dio reports that the Alexandrians had expected great rewards for supporting Vespasian's usurpation, but instead had additional taxes levied on them. Dio relates how the Alexandrian mob taunted Vespasian: 'Six obols more you demand of us!' they shouted at him. Titus allegedly intervened, preventing Vespasian doing any more than fining the Alexandrians. But they continued to berate Vespasian, shouting to Titus: 'We forgive him; for he does not know how to be Caesar!' Dio states that Vespasian 'restored order to Egypt' and left.[81] Suetonius reports a similar tradition, in which the Alexandrians compared Vespasian to an unpopular Alexandrian king: '[The Alexandrians] persisted in calling him [Vespasian] Kybiosactes, the surname of one of their kings who was scandalously mean.'[82] The Alexandrians were renowned for giving their rulers unfavourable epithets. They gave Ptolemy VIII the epithets Physcon ('potbelly'), Tryphon (conveying the meanings 'magnificent' and also 'decadent') and Kakergetes ('malefactor' instead of Euergetes, 'benefactor'). Ptolemy X was called Lathyrus ('chick-pea') as well as Kybiosactes ('salt-fish dealer'), and Ptolemy XIII Nothos ('bastard'). A similar comparison made by the Alexandrians between Ptolemy VIII and Caracalla is preserved in the *Historia Augusta*.[83] The Alexandrians had been instrumental in the accessions of both the mean Kybiosactes and Vespasian. They regretted their choice, because of Kybiosactes' vulgarity and lack of culture, and Queen Berenice had the latter executed after only one week in power.[84] The implication of this comparison is that the Alexandrians also regretted their role in the accession of the uncultured Vespasian. The literary forms in which

[79] Joseph. *Ap.* 2.63. Cf. Suet. *Tib.* 52.2. [80] Tac. *Ann.* 2.59. [81] Dio 66.8.2–9.2.
[82] Suet. *Vesp.* 19.2. [83] See p. 137. [84] Dio 39.57.1–2; Strabo 17.1.11.

these stories circulated around Alexandria have not survived, but it is possible that they could have originated from versions of the records which were made at these public gatherings.

A similar hostile tradition is reported about a visit of Severus Alexander to Alexandria, claiming that he was mocked for his Syrian lineage and priesthood of the god Elagabalus: 'The people of Antioch and of Egypt and Alexandria had annoyed him with jibes, as is their custom, calling him a Syrian synagogue chief and a high priest.'[85] However, it is not certain that Severus Alexander actually visited Alexandria. *SB* XIV 11651 mentions a projected visit by him to Alexandria.[86] The visit could have occurred in AD 231–3 when a *dux*, M. Aurelius Januarius, was in Egypt, possibly to arrange the imperial visit as well as make preparations for the Persian campaign.[87]

The Alexandrian god Serapis was the focus of a great number of miracle stories. Professional storytellers (*aretalogoi*) publicised the miracles of Serapis, and the stories of his miracles were written down and copies were kept in libraries in his temples.[88] Stories in mainstream writers of the Principate about the visits of Germanicus, Titus and particularly Vespasian appear to draw heavily on these localised Alexandrian traditions. Serapis aretalogical literature may also lie behind traditions reported elsewhere in the *Acta Alexandrinorum* literature.[89]

Pliny reports that Germanicus consulted the Apis bull about his future. After the bull was offered food it would lead the inquirer into one chamber for a positive prognosis and into another for a negative one. However, on this occasion the bull refused even to take food from Germanicus, thus foretelling his fate.[90] Suetonius reports that Titus was suspected of wanting to revolt against his father and that he 'strengthened this suspicion on his way to Alexandria by wearing a diadem at the consecration of the Apis bull at Memphis'.[91]

The stories of Vespasian's 'miracles' in the Alexandrian Serapeum appear to draw on this aretalogical literature.[92] The appellation 'the new Serapis' from *SB* XVI 12255 must be seen in the context of these traditions. Tacitus, Suetonius and Dio report essentially the same story of how, when

[85] SHA *Alex. Sev.* 28.7. [86] Thomas and Clarysse 1977: 195–207; van Minnen and Sosin 1996.
[87] Thomas and Clarysse 1977: 198–9; Parsons 1970: 389–97.
[88] An example is partially preserved in *P.Oxy.* XI 1382. On this aretalogical literature see Engelmann 1975. Some Serapis miracles are included in the sources of the Principate: e.g. Dio 77.15.4, a vision of Geta appeared to Caracalla in the temple of Serapis; Dio 79.7.3, a fire miraculously appeared in the Serapeum shortly before Caracalla's death but did not damage the temple.
[89] E.g. the Serapis miracle in *CPJ* II 157; the setting of *CPJ* II 154 in the Serapeum; Serapis is mentioned in *SB* VI 9213.
[90] Plin. *NH* 8.185. [91] Suet. *Tit.* 5.3. [92] Henrichs 1968b: 67; cf. Lattimore 1933–4: 441–9.

Vespasian visited the Serapeum alone, he saw a vision of his freedman, Basilides, whom he knew to be miles away from Alexandria, paying homage to him. Vespasian took this as a positive omen as Basilides' name was closely linked to the Greek word for 'king'. Sure enough, news of Vitellius' defeat reached him as he left the temple. The sources then relate how two men approached Vespasian at the bidding of the god Serapis and asked him to cure their ailments. According to Tacitus, Vespasian was astounded by their request, and consulted his advisers regarding the possibility of his being able to cure the men. They responded that Vespasian's touch would be effective, if the god intended it to be. Vespasian made physical contact with both men, and both were instantaneously cured.[93] The accounts differ on certain details but are close enough to deduce a common source. The source of these stories is unlikely to be Vespasian himself. After all, a 'royal, healing touch' was a very un-Roman concept, and it is unusual in miracle stories for the healer to be reluctant. Yet Tacitus stresses Vespasian's hesitation and reluctance. The source of the stories must be local Alexandrian traditions. The tales were evidently known by the writer of *SB* XVI 12255, who drew on the Serapis aretalogy in his record of Vespasian's entry into Alexandria and had the crowd refer to Vespasian as 'the new Serapis'.

REPORTS OF ALEXANDRIAN EMBASSIES TO ROME

Embassies were the main avenue of communication between cities and emperors. Embassies usually brought honours for the emperor but expected and hoped for favours and benefactions in return. Individual ambassadors might also hope to acquire the favour of the emperor and embark on a career in the imperial service as a result. The embassy in *SB* XII 11012, for example, offered Nero honours, including a gold crown (which he declined), and received a benefaction in return – confirmation that the status and position of the 6,475 Hellenes of the Arsinoite nome were to remain unchanged. Embassies usually were sent to Rome on special occasions, such as the beginning of a reign, or the adoption of an heir. A large city like Alexandria would probably have sent embassies to Rome frequently.

Several papyri present meetings of emperors and Alexandrian ambassadors in the imperial court in the form of minutes, the favoured form of the *Acta Alexandrinorum* proper. Two texts purport to be records of the meetings between Augustus and Alexandrian embassies in 10–9 BC

[93] Tac. *Hist*. 4.81–2; Suet. *Vesp*. 7.1–3; Dio 66.8.1.

(the recto of *P.Oxy.* XLII 3020 col. ii), and AD 12–13 (*P.Oxy.* XXV 2435 verso).[94] The emperor mentioned in *CPJ* II 150, a speech by an Alexandrian ambassador extolling the benefits that a council would bring to the city, is often considered to be Augustus, although I have suggested in chapter 2 that the emperor could be Gaius or Claudius.[95] These papyri were copied in the first half of the first century AD. *P.Oxy.* XXV 2435 verso was copied after AD 19, the dramatic date of the text on the recto.[96] These texts are generally taken to be the authentic minutes of historical meetings, derived from an official source, because they contain contemporary detail and are based on contemporary issues. There are no rival delegations present and the ambassadors are not in danger of execution. They are considered to be the documents on which later writers of the *Acta Alexandrinorum* proper modelled their writings or to which they referred as sources.[97]

The texts are fragmentary and their contents are therefore open to speculation. *P.Oxy.* XLII 3020 col. ii preserves a fragmentary speech delivered to Augustus by the spokesman for the Alexandrian delegation, an unnamed exegete. After praising Augustus as an 'unconquered hero' he states that the business of the embassy will be shared by himself and his colleagues. Theodorus will speak about Egypt, Ha[rp(?)]okrates about the *Idioslogos*, and he himself will speak about the city. The remainder of his speech is restored as: '[We have come] not to defend ourselves but to [claim our rights].'[98]

The text of *P.Oxy.* XXV 2435 verso gives a very precise date and setting for the meeting and lists the members of the imperial *consilium* who were present. Only the preliminary stages of the hearing are preserved. A spokesman of the delegation named Alexander states that the city has sent him on a mission to offer honours to the emperor, and he delivers the honorific decrees to Augustus and praises Livia, Tiberius and a recent victory. Another speaker continues with the main business of the embassy:

> Timoxenes, an orator: 'Lord Augustus, as much [. . .] as you grant to the [. . .], we beg that you grant just as much to your Alexandrians today. For although we are here to make a request of you, the truth is that with all zeal [our city] is worshipping your most sacred [fortune] and . . .'

[94] *P.Oxy.* XLII 3020 col. i records Augustus' written response to this delegation, on which see p. 50. The absence of Germanicus in the latter text suggests that the meeting took place between 1 January and 29 August AD 13, when Germanicus was visiting Gaul.

[95] See pp. 28–30. [96] On this text see pp. 60–1. [97] *P.Oxy.* XXV pp. 106–7. [98] *P.Oxy.* XLII p. 74.

The text is punctuated by shouts of 'Good luck! Good luck!' from an audience, probably a crowd in Rome, as the shouts of the other ambassadors would be unwelcome at such a formal occasion.

The history of Augustan Alexandria is too unclear to ascertain the precise purpose of these embassies. The exegete in *P.Oxy.* XLII 3020 may have requested a *boule* for the city. The problem concerning the *Idioslogos* may have been that the official was actively confiscating land owed to Caesar, but, as the *Gnomon of the Idioslogos* clearly shows, the jurisdiction of this official was much wider than this.[99] The first half of the extant document (sections 1–70) deals mainly with social legislation affecting Roman and Alexandrian citizens. Section 40 states that jurisdiction over the procedures concerning admission to the Alexandrian citizenship has now been given to the prefect, implying that the *Idioslogos* had previously judged this type of case. The Alexandrian complaint might therefore concern the interference of the *Idioslogos* in matters pertaining to the Alexandrian citizenship. This issue must have been of great importance to the Alexandrians, because the embassy had pursued Augustus to Gaul for a response.[100]

The embassy in *P.Oxy.* XXV 2435 verso followed either correspondence or a meeting between Augustus and the Alexandrian Jews. Philo's brother Tiberius Julius Alexander was in Rome as an ambassador in AD 12, where he witnessed Germanicus' consular games.[101] The business of this Jewish embassy may have been the leadership of the Alexandrian Jewish community. In AD 10–11 the Jewish ethnarch had died and Augustus had given orders by AD 14 to allow the Jews to institute a council of elders to replace him.[102] The Alexandrian Greeks already had their own council of elders, but the Jewish council was officially recognised by Augustus and given an explicitly political role. The purpose of the Alexandrian Greek embassy may therefore have been to request a council on the basis that a Jewish council now enjoyed an important political role. The issue of the Alexandrian Jews' ethnarch and council remained central to the Graeco-Jewish quarrels in first-century AD Alexandria, as Josephus' version of Claudius' letter to the Alexandrians reflects.[103]

P.Oxy. XLVII 3361, a small fragment from Oxyrhynchus written in a hand of the mid-second century, and *Ch.L.A.* IV 268, a poorly preserved papyrus

[99] Suggested in *P.Oxy.* XLII p. 70. The *Gnomon* was first drafted under Augustus although many sections were later amended. It is partially preserved in *P.Oxy.* XLII 3014 (first century AD) and *BGU* V 1210 (second century AD).

[100] On the visit see Dio 54.36.4; Oros. *Adv. pagan.* 6.21.22.

[101] Philo *Alex.* 54, 27. On Germanicus' games see Dio 56.27.4–5.

[102] Philo *Flacc.* 73–4.

[103] Joseph. *AJ* 19.280–5; cf. pp. 26–8.

written in a hand of the late second century in Latin on the verso of accounts written in Greek, appear to record meetings between Alexandrian ambassadors and Antonine emperors. *P.Oxy.* XLVII 3361 gives a setting, a date and a list of persons present who were consulted by the emperor Antoninus Pius. It therefore has the appearance of an introduction to proceedings in the imperial court in Rome.[104] The dating is given in Roman form – '. . . in Rome, the Kalends of April . . .' – after a line which could be restored as a consular dating. The remainder of the text gives Antoninus' full titulature and names the members of the imperial *consilium* who were present and consulted by the emperor in this matter:

> [The emperor] Caesar T[itus Aelius Hadrianus] Antoninus Augustus Pius, son of the divine Hadrianus, grandson of the divine Traianus [Parthicus], descendant of the divine Nerva . . . Marcus Aulerius [= Aurelius] [Verus Caesar] and Lucius [A]urelius Comodus [= Commodus] [his][105] sons . . . and each order of the [illustrious] men . . . having been taken into consultation . . .

The text breaks off after referring to the case or judgement against a certain Claudius. Despite the garbling of the names of Marcus Aurelius and Lucius Verus, the Latin dating formulae and the clear Latinisms used in the text certainly suggest that it was copied from a direct translation of a Latin and possibly official source.[106]

Ch.L.A. IV 268 appears to record the meeting of an Alexandrian embassy with Commodus, dated by Commodus' titulature to some point between AD 180 and 191. The embassy ([*l*]*egatio*) (fr. II l. 10) delivers a petition ([*li*]*b*[*e*]*llum*) (fr. II l. 6) to the emperor and gives the diplomatic greeting *tibi gratias agamus* (= *agimus*?) (fr. II l. 5). The reference to *bu*[*le*], the Latinised spelling of the word *boule*, suggests that the business of the embassy concerned the Alexandrian council.[107] The first line, 'from the *acta senatus*' (*ex actis in sen*[*at*]*u*), and the fact that the fragment is in Latin suggest an official Roman documentary source. Several *dubia vel incerta* may also refer to embassies to unidentified emperors.[108]

These texts have some clear documentary traits. *P.Oxy.* XXV 2435 verso gives the very specific information about the setting of the meeting and

[104] The *editio princeps* suggests that it is an imperial rescript or edict, but the text appears to give too much detail for this. Rescripts tend to list imperial titulature before proceeding to the matter at hand.

[105] The *editio princeps*, restoring the text as an imperial decree, supplements 'my sons' here.

[106] Thomas 1972: 103–12.

[107] Talbert 1988: 142–4 has suggested that the text refers to either the revolt of the Boukoloi or to the remote Dacian tribe of the Buri, who sent envoys to Commodus (Dio 72.3.1–2).

[108] E.g. *P.Bour.* 7, which concerns an embassy on the subject of the privileges, status and honours of the Alexandrian Greeks. See App. III, p. 222 on this text.

about those present which would typically be found in a documentary record of proceedings.[109] It is the 4th (or 24th) of the month of [?]. It is 9 o'clock in the morning, and Augustus receives the envoys in the temple of Apollo in the Roman library.[110] The text also lists the names of the members of the imperial *consilium* who were present:

> There sat with him [i.e. Augustus]: Tib[e]rius C[aesar] and D[r]usus, son of Caesar, and [Va]l[e]rius Messalinus Corvinus, [Ateiu(?)]s Cap[ito], Len[tulus(?)] Autur(?), [–]us Ma[s]o[ni]us, Titus [–]inus [–]o, Marcus Avidius Organius, [–]sianus T[–]us.

Several of these men can be identified as historical figures. Corvinus was consul in 2 BC, governor of Illyricum in AD 6, and received *ornamentalia triumphalia* at Tiberius' triumph. Corvinus also proposed in the Senate that the oath of loyalty should be sworn annually to Tiberius in AD 14.[111] Two Capitones were politically active in this period, Gaius Ateius (suffect consul AD 5) and Fonteius (suffect consul AD 12). Ateius, who became a prominent figure in Tiberius' court, is the more likely.[112] Cornelius Lentulus Augur, a wealthy senator, is also attested in this period.[113] Organius has been identified as Urgulanius, possibly a relation of Livia's companion, Urgulania.[114] In addition *P.Oxy.* XXV 2435 verso and *CPJ* II 150 appear to be headed by numbers, which could be file references. The exegete's speech in *P.Oxy.* XLII 3020 is written immediately after what appears to be an authentic imperial letter. Also the subject matter of the texts is apparently historical and deals with what the Alexandrians at the time considered injustices. The 'documentary' nature of *P.Oxy.* XLVII 3361 and *Ch.L.A.* IV 268 is discussed further in chapter 4.[115]

However, the texts are not verbatim copies of official documents. The imperial *consilium* in *P.Oxy.* XXV 2435 verso has been identified as the select council of twenty instituted by Augustus in AD 13.[116] This council had three permanent members, Augustus, Tiberius and Germanicus. The other members, who served for a year at a time, were the consuls of the year, the consuls designate (or suffect consuls?), Augustus' grandchildren and whoever else Augustus chose to appoint. The decisions of this council had the same standing as those made by the Senate.[117] However, the list

[109] See pp. 99–112. [110] Augustus met a Jewish embassy here in 4 BC (Joseph. *AJ* 17.301; *BJ* 2.81).
[111] Tac. *Ann.* 1.8.
[112] Bowman 1976: 154. Ateius Capito was present at the drafting of two *senatus consulta* in AD 19, the *SC de Cn. Pisone* (where Corvinus was also present) and Sherk 1988: no. 35 (a measure forbidding members of the elite taking part in public performances). On Ateius' career in the imperial court see Bauman 1989: 25–62.
[113] Tac. *Ann.* 3.59; Suet. *Tib.* 49. [114] Tac. *Ann.* 2.34, 4.21–2.
[115] See pp. 99–112 (especially 105). [116] *P.Oxy.* XXV p. 104. [117] Dio 56.28.1–3.

in the text does not concur with the quorum and composition of the council. The consuls, suffect consuls and consuls designate of AD 13 are not present.[118] The names of only nine members of the *consilium*, ten with Augustus, are preserved, and these are heavily abbreviated. There is no patronym, tribe, and often no *praenomen*. The names are also frequently garbled, e.g. Organius for Urgulanius, Auturus for Augurus. Musonius, it should be noted, was a much more common name than Masonius in this period. As it is unlikely that a writer would invent the names of the Roman councillors, the text is likely to have derived from a contemporary source, although this source is unlikely to have been an official Roman one.[119] As well as abbreviating and garbling the names of the Roman councillors the text refers to Drusus, Tiberius' son, as the 'son of Caesar', which makes no sense in a supposedly official document made in AD 13. Indeed this, and the position of Drusus' name immediately after those of Augustus and Tiberus, suggest that the copy was made between AD 19 and 26, when it was common to call Drusus the 'son of Caesar' as Tiberius' heir apparent. The writer has added another personal touch to the 'document', punctuating the text with the shouts of a crowd. The same writer also inserted the shouts of a crowd into the text on the recto. This is a literary device which adds a sense of importance and drama to the proceedings, and one which recurs in examples of the *Acta Alexandrinorum* proper, which allege that the proceedings of Alexandrian embassies attracted great crowds and caused controversy in Rome.[120]

TRIAL SCENES: TRIALS AND IMPEACHMENTS OF PREFECTS

Several papyri recount attempted prosecutions of Prefects of Egypt by Alexandrian citizens in the presence of an emperor. *SB* XXII 15203, of unknown provenance, contains an indictment against a Postumus on the recto. The story of the trial of a Maximus occurs in four, or perhaps five, texts. The most substantial of these comprises six columns of a vicious prosecution speech against Maximus and was copied onto the recto of *P.Oxy.* III 471 in the second century AD by an accomplished scribe, and is elaborately punctuated, like a literary work. *P.Schub.* 42, of unknown provenance and copied in the mid-second century AD, contains an exchange between three Alexandrian ambassadors in the presence of Trajan regarding the conduct of Maximus. However, of the four surviving columns, only sections of

[118] Consuls and suffects in AD 13: C. Silius Caecina Largus, L. Munatius Plancus, [–] Favonius, and possibly M. Lollius; consuls designate in AD 13: Sex. Pompeius and Sex. Appuleius.
[119] See pp. 99–112. [120] E.g. *CPJ* II 157, 159.

col. iii are in a reasonable state of preservation. *Acta* XXI, *BKT* IX 177 and *Acta* XXII (which mentions a Maxi[mus?] in i.5) are all poorly preserved scraps of papyri which may have a connection to this trial.[121] Complaints against a Lupus appear in the story of the trial of Paulus and Antoninus. An early third-century AD text from Hermopolis Magna written in a cursive hand, *SB* VI 9213, tells the story of the trial of Heraclitus, but the two extant columns are badly damaged. *P.Oxy.* XXXIV 2690, from third-century AD Oxyrhynchus, preserves only the extreme line-endings of one column and the line-beginnings of a second. The text of col. ii has been restored as the speech of an emperor delivered at the impeachment of an unnamed Roman official.

These prefects can be identified as historical characters. Gaius Julius Postumus served as prefect under Claudius in AD 45–8.[122] Several Maximi held the prefecture of Egypt.[123] The Maximus in the stories is generally thought to be the Trajanic prefect C. Vibius Maximus, who had served as prefect of an *ala* in Syria and of a cohort in Dalmatia before this appointment.[124] He was also a cultivated literary figure, who was a friend of Pliny, Martial and Statius and was composing an epitome of world history.[125] Rutilius Lupus was a Trajanic prefect and held office in AD 113–17. Septimius Heraclitus was prefect under Caracalla in AD 215–16.

Nevertheless, the texts may not refer to historical trials. We have no evidence to suggest that Postumus or Lupus were ever tried, although it is plausible that Alexandrians facing trial in the imperial court might attempt to deflect blame from themselves by implicating prefects. There is some circumstantial evidence to suggest that emperors punished Maximus and Heraclitus, although the emperors' motives are unclear. Several inscriptions of Vibius Maximus in the empire underwent *abolitio nominis*, suggesting that he suffered some kind of disgrace.[126] Heraclitus was removed abruptly from office in AD 216 and a temporary prefect had to be appointed before the next prefect Valerius Datus arrived.[127] Nonetheless the mainstream historical sources of the Principate only attest that a handful of *praefecti Aegypti* fell from grace – Cornelius Gallus, Avillius Flaccus, Tuscus – and their fates

[121] On these texts see App. I, pp. 180 and 182 on *Acta* XXII.

[122] I find it unlikely that Postumus in this text is Rabirius Postumus, the *dioiketes* of Egypt under Ptolemy XII Auletes who was prosecuted at Rome for *res repetundae*. This was suggested in the *editio princeps* in Balconi 1993: 3–20; see also Balconi 1994: 219–22. Cf. Cicero *Rab. Post.*

[123] M. Magius Maximus (AD 14–15), L. Laberius Maximus (82–3), and C. Vibius Maximus (103–7).

[124] E.g. *P.Oxy* III p. 147.

[125] Plin. *Ep.* 3.2, 9.1; Martial 1.69, 2.18, 10.77; Statius *Silv.* 4.7.1–56; *CIL* III dipl. XVI 38. White 1973: 295–301 however argues that these sources refer to different Vibii Maximi.

[126] *IGR* I 1148 (dated 14 May AD 109), 1175 (dated 30 August AD 103), 1351.

[127] See p. 133.

were caused by a breakdown in their relationship with the emperor.[128] The Prefect of Egypt was a personal friend of the emperor, as were all imperial appointees, and any attempt to prosecute a prefect was only likely to succeed in exceptional circumstances. Therefore we cannot discount the possibility that some or all of these stories may be fictional. The frequent references to Maximus may perhaps simply exploit a common Roman name.

The most common charge levelled against the prefects in these texts is that of mal-administration and of interfering in the appointment of Alexandrian magistracies and institutions. *SB* XXII 15203 accuses Postumus of these crimes:

> . . . Postumus. For when he assumed the position, he removed those people who had been put into office on merit and those who had received their positions from their fathers and grandfathers. He appointed unsuitable and desperate men, having sold all things guarded carefully for all time; and in this way he ordered that the fittest and most useful administrators be removed, for the purpose of robbery.

Similar charges are levelled against Maximus. *P.Oxy.* III 471 begins in the middle of the prosecutor's speech and introduces further charges against Maximus to the emperor with documentary evidence apparently cited at several points in the trial (e.g. ii.15, ii.31–iii.4) to support his case. The main charges are:

(a) Maximus is engaged in usury and forced debtors to pay him interest even before they had received their loan. Letters written by Maximus are produced to prove this allegation (ii.5–15).
(b) Maximus has interfered in the appointment of Alexandrian magistracies, in particular the gymnasiarchy, and a document is again cited as evidence of this:

    > 'Berenicianus is to be gymnasiarch up to the emperor's nineteenth year, and Anicetus up to the twenty-ninth year.'

    The prosecutor implies that Maximus had accepted bribes in return for securing these extraordinarily long terms of office.
(c) Maximus has taken an improper interest in a wealthy seventeen-year-old boy, who allegedly emerged every morning from Maximus' bedchamber and even accompanied him on official business.

There are several other isolated accusations that Maximus has confiscated the property of the poor, and once executed a man in the theatre for not wearing the correct white garments. White garments were associated with

[128] On Gallus see Suet. *Aug.* 66; Dio 53.23.5–24.1; Flaccus, see p. 12; Tuscus, Suet. *Ner.* 35.

the gymnasiarchy, but Maximus does not seem to be accused of executing a gymnasiarch. Eudaemon, an ambassador in *P.Schub*. 42, echoes the claim that Maximus was interfering in Alexandrian institutions, in this case the *ephebeia*:

> Eudaemon the *archidikastes*: 'I especially ought to make an accusation against Maximus. During my term he has been known to order young boys to be trained in the gymnasium until their eleventh year, and one of these was my Theon . . .'

If *Acta* XXII is related to the stories about Maximus, then it would imply that he was prosecuted in the aftermath of a serious disturbance in the city, perhaps involving the Jews, during the course of which some youths were executed.[129]

The complaints against Lupus and Heraclitus are closely related to periods of serious unrest in Alexandria. An 'edict of Lupus' is referred to several times in stories set in the early second century AD, and the contents of this edict may have formed the basis of the Alexandrian complaint.[130] In *CPJ* II 158a col. iv the Alexandrian Greeks appear to defend their refusal to surrender their weapons as Lupus had requested, but are severely criticised for this by Hadrian, who endorses the prefect's actions:

> Theon read [the memorandum] of Lupus in which [he ordered them to hand over their] weapons and withdraw . . . [Caesa]r: '[He had the authority(?)] to demand your [weapons] . . .'[131]

The Alexandrian Antoninus makes further allegations in col. vi, accusing Lupus of not forwarding letters to the emperor and of passing a ruling about Jewish residence which was unfavourable to the Greeks:

> For when we were in such pressing circumstances and so many letters had been sent to you saying that he [the prefect] had ordered the impious Jews to transfer their residence to a place from which they could easily attack and ravage our well-named city. If not a line of this matter fell into your beneficent hands, then the reason for your august words is clear. It is obvious that this has been perpetrated against you to prevent you from having evidence of the woes that have befallen us.

The complaint concerning his actions towards the Jews is not clear. The only reference we have to a prefect 'settling' the Jews in any single area of the city is Flaccus' herding the Jews into the Delta quarter in AD 38. The writer may be alleging that a similar incident has occurred, or Antoninus

[129] See pp. 80–2. [130] *CPJ* II 158a i.4–5, iv.3; *BKT* IX 115 ii.4.

[131] Von Premerstein 1922: 268–9 continued Hadrian's rebuke as: 'You had [a sufficient number of guardians] in the legions.' A new reading disproves this supplement, but mentions of soldiers and praetorians later in the column suggest that the gist could be correct.

could be complaining about the delta quarter, and requesting, particularly in the aftermath of the Jewish Revolt, that the emperor expel the Jews from the city.

Heraclitus is apparently accused of mishandling a riot involving slaves and tradesmen in Alexandria in the fragmentary *SB* VI 9213.[132] The first column begins with a memorandum against Heraclitus being read out, which refers to someone 'abus[ing and doing violence against] beloved Serapis'. Further allusions to a centurion (l. 5), twelve statues destroyed in a workshop (l. 6), and other statues which were at Canopus (ll. 7–8) belong to the context of a riot.[133] The subject of ii.1–10 would appear to be the part that slaves have played in the violence. There are several references to an embassy and a letter(?) which had been written (ii.15–16), but the context of the peculiar phrases 'to have sent embassies and revolted' (ii.14) and 'the forbidden embassy' (ii.31) is wholly unclear. In the following two exchanges Caracalla is apparently highly critical of the suppression of the rioting by Heraclitus, who strenuously justifies his actions:

[Antoninus Augustus said:] 'So you ordered [. . . .] to be [. . . ? . . .]?'
Heracli[tus said: 'I did not order . . .] to be [. . . ? . . .], but [. . . ? . . .]'

[Antoninus Augus]tus said: 'You have killed [. . . ? . . .]'
[Heraclitus sa]id: 'I did not [. . . ? . . .]'
[Heraclitus said:] 'The centurions ought to have [. . . ? . . .]

[A]ntoninus Augustu[s said:] 'The centurions [ought to have(?)] led to you a[ll the me]n, not just the thirty [men(?)]'.[134]

Alexandrians often appear in these stories as prosecutors. In *P.Schub.* 42 Heraius, [Ju?]lius Diodorus and Eudaemon the *archidikastes* prosecute Maximus.[135] While Diodorus is otherwise unknown, Heraius is probably the leading scholar at the Alexandrian Museum mentioned in another of the *Acta Alexandrinorum* proper.[136] Eudaemon, despite the common usage of the name, may perhaps be the Alexandrian citizen Valerius Eudaemon, who enjoyed a career in the imperial service. This man was a courtier of Hadrian, 'procurator of the district of Alexandria', procurator of the Greek and Latin libraries, was in charge of Greek letters and also held procuratorships in several eastern provinces before becoming Prefect of Egypt in

[132] On which see pp. 133–8. Tradesmen and slaves are also involved in the rioting behind the stories in *P.Oxy.* XXII 2339, *P.Mil.Vogl.* II 47 and *CPJ* II 158a and b.
[133] These were perhaps statues of Caracalla, perhaps in the guise of Alexander the Great, destroyed in the rioting. Cf. Herodian 4.8.1–3; Dio 77.7.1.
[134] *SB* VI 9213 i.9–11, i.31–ii.1.
[135] Eudaemon is also presumably the *archidikastes* mentioned in *P.Oxy.* III 471 vi.7.
[136] *P.Oxy.* XVIII 2177; Musurillo 1954: 159.

AD 141/2.[137] Another Eudaemon, perhaps a relative of this man, was subsequently an *archidikastes* in AD 143.[138] Perhaps another prosecutor is referred to in *P.Oxy.* III 471 vi.3–4: Valerius Callinicus, a scholar from the Museum. The would-be prosecutors of Lupus are discussed below.[139] A certain Herarchus, possibly an Alexandrian, appears to be involved in the proceedings against Heraclitus. The apparent title of *SB* VI 9213, written in the margin by a second hand, is probably '[the case] against [Hera]clitus' rather than 'Caesar against Heraclitus' (Κ<αῖσαρ> πρὸς [Ἡρα]κλε̣ί̣τ̣ο̣υ̣).[140]

The stories of these trials are presented in different formats. Postumus and Maximus are condemned in long, rhetorical prosecution speeches by a single speaker in *SB* XXII 15203 and *P.Oxy.* III 471 respectively. The stories of the trial of Maximus (*P.Schub.* 42 and *BKT* IX 177), of Heraclitus (*SB* VI 9213), of an unknown prefect (in *P.Oxy.* XXXIV 2690) and the accusations against Lupus (*CPJ* II 158a) are told in the form of minutes featuring several participants, with varying degrees of narrative. The charges levelled against the prefects in *SB* XXII 15203 and *P.Oxy.* III 471 are historically plausible, but this in itself does not prove that the texts are verbatim copies of documents made at trials in the imperial court. The existence of different recensions of the stories about the trial of Maximus shows that there was no single canonical version of the story and that it could be told in ways that emphasised the role played by different ambassadors.

There are several discernible fictional elements in these trials, which the story of the trial of an unnamed prefect illustrates well. In *P.Oxy.* XXXIV 2690 the prefect is said to be a friend of the emperor (cf. i.3 – 'your friend'). Much of the emperor's speech rebukes an assertion that the prefect would enjoy favour on account of their friendship:

> . . . while he believed that he had lighted on a judge friendly to him.
> The emperor: 'No! For you know very well that even before now I have said that it is necessary to bear in mind and necessary to remember this fact throughout the whole procedure, namely that the position of associates and of judges are different. For when you associate with someone and make him gifts of gold or silver or ivory or lands or other things like these, you may do it because you are his friend and it becomes you to bestow these presents. But when you announce a trial, publish the names of the parties, summon your advisers, start the water-clock and bid the speeches begin, no longer are you a friend, but a judge, no longer do you attend to anything but truth and justice. For you are investigating who is deserving of pardon or punishment.'

[137] SHA *Hadr.* 15.3; M. Aur. *Med.* 8.25; *ILS* 1449; *SB* I 3998.
[138] *SB* III 6291; *BGU* III 741. [139] See pp. 86, 87.
[140] Musurillo 1954: 79 suggests that this is the likely reading, although κ<ρισις>, κ<λησις> or κ<ατηγορία> are more likely.

It is totally implausible in an historical trial that a prosecutor would question the emperor's integrity as a judge due to his friendship with the defendant or that the emperor would need to defend this. The same theme may occur in a tiny fragment telling the story of the trial of Maximus, *BKT* IX 177, which mentions '[my(?)] friend Maxim[us]' (recto l. 6). The theme of an emperor defending his friends is a motif from the *Acta Alexandrinorum* stories. Claudius, for example, tells Isidorus: 'Say nothing . . . against my friend. You have already done away with two of my friends, Theon the exegete and Naevius the Prefect of Egypt and the Prefect of the Praetorian Guard at Rome.'[141]

The portrayal of the Alexandrians in these stories is similar to that of the *Acta Alexandrinorum* proper. The extant column of *P.Schub*. 42 preserves an exchange between Heraius, [Ju?]lius Diodorus and Eudaemon the *archidikastes* in the presence of an emperor, who is addressed as 'Lord'. Only Eudaemon's speech (cited above p. 76) and Heraius' highly obscure initial words are preserved:

Heraius: 'You are obviously worthy of the embassy. Like odourless wine in no matter what jar it is kept you do not show [emotion(?)] after flattery. But now we have passed from opposition to refutation.'

The meaning is unclear. Musurillo's explanation, that the ambassadors were flattering the emperor by comparing his temperament to that of odourless wine, seems bizarre and implausible.[142] It may be the case that Heraius is insulting Maximus or the emperor here. Diodorus appears to back up Heraius by claiming that someone would have prevailed if 'he had not been countered by the opposition of Heraius'. In another section of this text an ambassador mentions 'the fatherland' (i.10). The context is lost, but the Alexandrians prosecuting Maximus may be emphasising their strong links with their fatherland, as Alexandrian ambassadors in the *Acta Alexandrinorum* proper frequently do. Herarchus in *SB* VI 9213 appears to refer to his ensuing martyrdom, and several of his exchanges in the story of the trial of Heraclitus are similar to speeches from the *Acta Alexandrinorum* proper. We could compare, for example, the speech of Herarchus with a speech of Paulus in *CPJ* II 158a:

Herarchus said: 'Before [my?] decapitation, listen so that you may learn . . .'

Paulus: 'So listen to me Caesar, as to one who may not live another day.'[143]

[141] *CPJ* II 156a ii.15–19, 156b i.11–16. [142] Musurillo 1954: 159.
[143] *SB* VI 9213 ii.11–12; *CPJ* II 158 vi.6–7.

TRIAL SCENES SET IN ALEXANDRIA

Several papyri appear to report trial scenes which are similar to the *Acta Alexandrinorum* proper, but which take place before the prefect in Alexandria rather than, or perhaps in addition to, the emperor in Rome. *P.Oxy.* IV 706, copied in the early second century AD, records part of a trial of Heraclides before a certain Lupus. A Heraclides is also referred to in *BKT* IX 115, which is a small fragment of a trial in the imperial court from the Fayum written in the late second century AD. *P.Oxy.* XXII 2339, three fragmentary columns from the mid-first century AD, appears to report a trial in Alexandria, as it refers to magistrates who are being held in 'the citadel', possibly the summit where the Serapeum stood. The text records direct speech of a judge and defendant, but the form is not typical of précised trial minutes.[144] *Acta* XXII, a series of badly damaged fragments from Karanis copied in the mid-second century AD, may record a trial in Alexandria before a Max[imus] (i.5), although references to 'sailing' (fr. A.3, E.1) and to a 'Lord' (fr. II col. ii 12) could suggest that part of the story reports a trial before the emperor in Rome. The text is narrative in places, rhetorical in others, and uses direct speech at times.

Several participants in these stories are named but cannot be identified with certainty. The Prefect Lupus in *P.Oxy.* IV 706 could be the Flavian prefect Tiberius Julius Lupus or the Trajanic prefect Rutilius Lupus, who were in office in AD 71–3 and 113–17 respectively. Internal details in the text suggest that the Heraclides of this text is an Alexandrian citizen.[145] This Heraclides may be the same man as that being tried in *BKT* IX 115 before an unnamed emperor, referred to as 'Caesar', during the course of which trial an 'edict of [Lu]pus' is referred to. Three named defendants appear in *P.Oxy.* XXII 2339, Apollodotus, Peteirios (whose name, garbled as Poteirios and Petoiris elsewhere in the text, could perhaps be the better-attested Petosiris) and a woman named Epoche.[146] The Max[imus] of *Acta* XXII may be one of the many prefects bearing this name.[147] A woman also features in this text and appears defending her young son. The references to a *kurios*, who is addressed in sections, suggests that at least some of this story takes place in the imperial court in Rome. Jews may be involved in some of these texts. A *polemos*, the word commonly used to describe the violence between Greeks and Jews in the first century AD, is mentioned in *P.Oxy.* XXII 2339 and perhaps also in *BKT* IX 115 i.7

[144] *P.Oxy.* XXII p. 117. [145] *P.Oxy.* IV p. 168.
[146] The fourth is referred to simply as αὐτόν (i.10). [147] See p. 74.

(*pole*[*mos*]). In the former text, one defendant refers to a petition about the 'uncultured' men, perhaps the Jews.[148] *Arabarchoi*, the chief contractors for customs dues, are mentioned in *Acta* XXII. There are two examples of this position being held by Jews who were also possibly Roman citizens.[149]

Although there are few clues regarding the dramatic dates of these stories, the likely involvement of the Jews suggests that the most probable settings are AD 38, 66–70 and 115–17. From the references to Lupus, *P.Oxy.* IV 706 and *BKT* IX 115 could refer to an episode from AD 115–17. The hand of *P.Oxy.* XXII 2339, dated in the *editio princeps* to not 'much later than the middle of the first century', would suggest that the text refers to the Graeco-Jewish violence of AD 38 or AD 66–70 rather than AD 115–17. This text also refers to a crucifixion, a punishment usually reserved only for slaves in the Roman Empire, but one which Philo alleges that Flaccus extended to the Jews in AD 38.[150] Crucifixion may also have been the punishment given to the Alexandrian slaves involved in violence against the Jews in *CPJ* II 158a, set in the early second century AD.[151]

P.Oxy. XXII 2339 and *Acta* XXII may refer to the same story. Both take place in the aftermath of a period of violence. The references in *Acta* XXII to striking against (fr. II ii.16), being surrounded(?) in a circle (iii.2–3), breastplates (iii.6), guards (iii.10) and military cloaks (*chlamydes*) (fr. III l. 8) suggest some kind of military response by the Roman army to unrest in the city. The theatre, which played a prominent part in the great Graeco-Jewish disturbances in Alexandria in the first century AD, is also involved (fr. III l. 2). The nature of the trial is not clear, but the defendants may include Alexandrian youths (ephebes). In one section, a woman appears to plead with the emperor on behalf of her young son:

> She was untied by [them] and holding her [son], she leapt out, approached [him] and said: 'I have a young son (ἔχω μελλέφηβον).'

The context of her plea is unclear. Because no females appear elsewhere in this literature, the woman could be the female defendant Epoche from *P.Oxy.* XXII 2339.

In these stories the defendants face serious punishments, as the defendants in the *Acta Alexandrinorum* proper do. In *P.Oxy.* IV 706 Lupus gives an adverse judgement, basing his decision on the differences in the laws governing Egyptians and Alexandrians, and threatens to have someone beaten

[148] Barns 1956: 120; cf. *CPJ* II 150 ii.6, apparently referring to the Jews in similar terms.
[149] Burkhalter 1999: 41–54, nos. 3 (Gaius Julius Alexander) and 5 (Demetrius).
[150] Philo *Flacc.* 72, 84–5. [151] See pp. 88–9.

if further complaints are made. This threat would contravene the privilege of Alexandrian citizens to be beaten with the flat of a sword rather than flogged.[152] The issue of exemption from flogging also features in a speech of the judge in *P.Oxy.* XII 2339:

> '. . . that you may know that if you are flogged the law is not going to be abandoned and that we do not fear failure in war, and you shall be beaten forthwith.' And he ordered him to be scourged with whips. Peteirios and [. . . . . .] were on the point of being scourged . . .

The meaning is obscure, but the defendants may have threatened that their compatriots would react with violence if their privileged exemption from flogging was not upheld. After the flogging, the Romans intend to behead Apollodotus and Peteirios (i.6–7).[153] Elsewhere in the text someone who has promised to bring 'the other weavers' into a state of disaffection is about to be crucified. In one section of *Acta* XXII it is claimed that someone 'led away the children' ([ἀπ]ήγαγεν, κύριε, τὰ τέκνα) and the letters απαγ[ ] appear in *BKT* IX 115 ii.9. The verb ἀπάγω elsewhere in the *Acta Alexandrinorum* proper conveys the sense of 'leading away to death'.

TRIAL SCENES IN ROME

The *Acta Alexandrinorum* proper report the trials of Alexandrian citizens in the imperial court. Before I proceed to the core group of texts I will firstly examine two other stories of trials before Flavian emperors, one of which records the lengthy speeches of advocates instead of using the form of minutes employed in the *Acta Alexandrinorum* proper; the other is poorly preserved. *P.Oxy.* XX 2264, from Oxyrhynchus and written in a hand of the late second century, preserves the tops of five fragmentary columns, although the first and fifth are in a poor condition. It contains a rhetorical speech delivered to an emperor by an embassy that has sailed to Rome at the trial of a certain Diogenes. The text has been interpreted as either a defence or prosecution speech.[154] In fact, some sections appear to defend Diogenes, and others condemn him, suggesting that a rival delegation may be present. The text begins by describing an incident that took place in a gymnasium twelve years ago when Nero was alive (ii.5–6), which would make Vespasian the emperor hearing this case.[155] *P.Harr.* II 240, written in

[152] Delia 1991: 30–2.
[153] Beheading was a common form of execution under the Principate – see Garnsey 1970: 124 n. 2.
[154] See note in App. 1, p. 201.
[155] This is more likely to be the gymnasium in Alexandria, although Nero did have one built in Rome in AD 61 (Tac. *Ann.* 14.47).

a hand of the mid-second century AD, and perhaps from Oxyrhynchus, partially preserves the middle portion of a single column containing a trial scene set before Titus.

Several of the characters are known from other sources. Diogenes has been identified as the Cynic philosopher of this name mentioned by Dio, whom Vespasian scourged and probably exiled for entering the theatre in Rome and denouncing Titus' relationship with the Jewish princess Berenice in AD 75.[156] Dio states that his accomplice was a certain Heras, who has been identified with the Alexandrian Heraius mentioned in another of the *Acta Alexandrinorum* proper set dramatically around thirty years after this story.[157] The Diogenes of this text would appear to be an Alexandrian citizen and may have been tried in connection to the *stasis* attested in Alexandria early in Vespasian's reign.[158] *P.Harr.* II 240 mentions magistrates, Alexandrians, a certain Hermias, a Ku[. . .]ius, Titus Caesar, [. . . .]ius and Vestinus. The latter two are perhaps present as members of Titus' *consilium*, and Vestinus could be the Neronian Prefect of Egypt of AD 60–2. Hermias is probably an Alexandrian and Ku[. . .]ius may be a Roman name such as Curtius or Quirinius. *P.Oxy.* XX 2264 takes the form of a speech and is highly rhetorical, as orations should be, making it impossible to tell whether the text is a verbatim record of a prosecution or defence speech, or a literary creation. The participants of *P.Harr.* II 240 all speak in the form of trial minutes, and the text follows first-century AD practice by not introducing the direct speech with a verb of saying.[159] There are no obvious literary elements, such as attempts to characterise Titus or Hermias, although it must be stressed that the fragment is small and very badly damaged.

Both texts report dramatic trials. Diogenes had been punished for his involvement in the incident twelve years ago and is now in trouble again for allegedly slandering Vespasian. The argument of the defence could be that because Diogenes had not actually criticised Nero, despite Nero's many faults, he could never even consider censuring the virtuous Vespasian:

> Diogenes neither criticised then nor criticises now. (Perhaps the latter's death too should have been avenged).[160] Have faith in his present silence! For twelve years ago he did not criticise Caesar, although he had in him a judge easily angered, naturally biased against the rich, easily irritated against those of any standing at all [i.e. the nobility]. He did not criticise Caesar, though he might have spoken twelve years before . . . but said nothing . . .

[156] Dio 66.15.4–5. [157] *P.Oxy.* XX p. 130 n. 4. Heraius appears in *P.Oxy.* XVIII 2177.
[158] See p. 7. [159] See p. 101.
[160] The context of this sentence is unclear and it could be translated differently.

The speaker continues his defence in col. iii. Diogenes has already suffered greatly; he is not present and has not sailed with them (possibly because he was in exile), and there is a mention of a public executioner. In col. iv a prosecutor appears to take over, and the impending execution is hinted at: '[Lord] . . . spend your time on this decision. It is your life that is slandered, your [throne] that is censured. The man telling these lies against you must not live!' In col. v there is an allusion to a 'treacherous accusation' involving money, perhaps recalling Vespasian's unpopular financial arrangements in Alexandria.

P.Harr. II 240 preserves an exchange between Titus, Hermias and Ku[. . .]ius:

Hermias: 'Lord [. . .] Let K[u . . .]ius make his defence speech.'
Titus Caesar: '[Ku . . .]ius, make your defence speech.'
Ku[. . .]ius: 'I am not ready [to make] my defence speech.'

Ku[. . .]ius appears to be the person on trial in the extant section at least. If Hermias is prosecuting a Roman named Ku[. . .]ius, then the text could tell the story of the Alexandrians denouncing an allegedly corrupt Roman official. Nevertheless, Hermias seems to be defending Ku[. . .]ius. Alexandrians with Roman names do appear in other stories, e.g. Antoninus in *CPJ* II 158a.

Among the stories of the trials of Alexandrians in Rome is a core group of very similar stories which, along with the texts concerning the trial of Isidorus and Lampon, form the *Acta Alexandrinorum* proper.[161] *CPJ* II 157, from Oxyrhynchus and copied in the third century AD, preserves the lower portions of four columns of writing, telling the story of rival Greek and Jewish delegations which travelled to Rome to meet Trajan, during the course of which an Alexandrian named Hermaiscus is executed. The story of the trial of Paulus and Antoninus is reported in three papyri. *CPJ* II 158a consists of two fragments now housed in collections in Paris and London. The text, which was copied in the early second century AD, preserves the remains of eight columns. The text on the recto (cols. i–iv) tells the story of the early stages of the trial, the text on the verso (cols. v–viii) the latter stages. The Paris and London fragments do not follow on directly from each other, and there are probably significant lacunae after cols. iii, iv and v.[162] *CPJ* II 158b, a single column from the Fayum, was copied in the third century and preserves a different version of the section of the trial reported in

[161] See pp. 39–45 on the stories of Isidorus and Lampon.

[162] See note in App. 1, pp. 190–2.

CPJ II 158a ii–iii. *P.Oxy*. XVIII 2177, four fragments from the same text copied in the third century, reports a trial in which several Athenians also appear to be involved.[163] *CPJ* II 159a and b, which originate from Oxyrhynchus and preserve six consecutive columns of writing, were copied in the third century and tell the story of the trial of Appian.

Trajan is named as the emperor of *CPJ* II 157, which also features his wife Plotina. However, the emperors in the other texts are simply called 'Caesar'. The events of *CPJ* II 158a are set in the immediate aftermath of the Jewish Revolt of AD 115–17 and post-date the events referred to in *P.Mil.Vogl*. II 47, a copy of an edict dated to October AD 115.[164] An internal reference to the emperor's Dacian campaigns would suggest Trajan, although Hadrian did campaign against a Dacian tribe, the Roxolani, in AD 119. In one section a document is cited which is addressed to [Ram]mius Martialis, Hadrian's first Prefect of Egypt. Although the trial refers to events which occurred in AD 115, for Trajan to be the emperor of *CPJ* II 158a, the embassies must have met him in the eastern empire in AD 116–17, before the end of the Jewish Revolt. Such muddles and anachronisms are common in the stories set under Gaius and Claudius.[165] The emperor of *P.Oxy*. XVIII 2177 is usually considered to be Hadrian, although the reference to Heraius, an Alexandrian present at the impeachment of Maximus, could suggest that the emperor is actually Trajan.[166] An imperial letter cited during the course of this trial scene could be written either by Trajan or Hadrian.[167] The emperor of *CPJ* II 159a and b is said to be the son of an Antoninus, who, unlike his son, was a 'philosopher', 'not avaricious', and 'good'. The two possible father–son pairings are Antoninus Pius–Marcus Aurelius and Marcus Aurelius–Commodus. Most commentators have identified the emperor as Commodus, son of the good, philosophical Antoninus (Marcus Aurelius), although the first editor argued that the emperor of this text was Marcus Aurelius.[168]

The names of ten Alexandrian Greeks and seven Alexandrian Jews who were elected as ambassadors are listed in *CPJ* II 157 i.3–17:

> [Herma]i[scus?], Dionysius, who had held several procuratorships, and Salvius, Julius Salvius, Timagenes, Pastor the gymnasiarch, Julius Phanias, Philoxenus the gymnasiarch-elect, Sotion the gymnasiarch, Theon, Athenodorus, and Paulus of Tyre, who offered his services as advocate to the Alexandrians. On learning this the Jews also selected ambassadors from their own group, and thus were chosen Simon, Glaucon, Theudes, Onias, Colon, Jacob, with Sopatrus of Antioch as their advocate.

[163] This text is discussed further on pp. 126–7. [164] On this text see p. 59. [165] See pp. 35–6. [166] *P.Oxy*. XVIII pp. 96–101. [167] On this letter see p. 56. [168] *P.Oxy*. I p. 63.

Dionysius may be the famous Alexandrian scholar of this period, who had a career in the imperial service.[169] Julius Salvius may be the famous jurist of the Hadrianic period, Salvius Julianus.[170] Philoxenus may be the Alexandrian professor mentioned in a letter of the late first century AD.[171] Julius Phanias, Theon and Hermaiscus may be relatives of the Tiberius Claudius Phanias, Dionysius son of Theon and Hermaiscus son of Apollonius listed as ambassadors to Claudius in *CPJ* II 153. Athenodorus, referred to as 'Claudius Athen[odorus]' in iv.17, may be a descendant of the man of the same name in *BKT* IX 64. The Suda mentions an orator named Paulus of Tyre, who 'went on an embassy to the emperor Hadrian on behalf of the metropolis of Tyre'.[172] The embassy was full of prominent Alexandrian Greeks, with two gymnasiarchs, a gymnasiarch-elect, and Dionysius, who followed a career in the imperial service. It may be these Alexandrian ambassadors, who had strong links with the Alexandrian Museum, that are referred to in an imperial letter cited in *P.Oxy.* XVIII 2177, where they are described as 'scholars' and as being led by 'the most learned Paulus'. None of the Jewish ambassadors are otherwise known.

Paulus of Tyre is referred to as an ambassador for the Alexandrians in *CPJ* II 157, 158a and *P.Oxy*. XVIII 2177. Despite Musurillo's reservations, these three Pauli are likely to be the same man, who became a stock character in the *Acta Alexandrinorum* literature, playing as large a role in the stories set in the early second century as Balbillus had in those set in the time of Claudius.[173] The author of *CPJ* II 158a differentiates Paulus from the other ambassadors (cf. i.10 'Paulus and the others'), indicating that Paulus was not an Alexandrian himself. Paulus declares in vi.1–5, perhaps in response to the emperor questioning the presence of a foreigner on an Alexandrian embassy: 'My only concern is for the grave in Alexandria which I expect to have. Advancing as I am towards this, I shall have no fear of telling the truth.' The fact that Paulus expected to have a grave in Alexandria suggests that he had been granted the Alexandrian citizenship for his commitment and services to the city. Paulus' name appears twice in *P.Oxy.* XVIII 2177, in a section of the text citing an imperial letter, suggesting that he may have been present at this hearing too.[174]

Two other ambassadors from *CPJ* II 157 reappear in further stories. Theon speaks in defence of the Alexandrian Greeks in *CPJ* II 158a. Athenodorus

[169] Suda s.v. Dionysius of Alexandria, son of Glaucon.
[170] Suggested in Weber 1915: 51 n. 5; on Julianus' career see Bauman 1989: 235–63.
[171] *P.Oxy.* XVIII 2190. This may be the Claudius Philoxenus of *BGU* I 73 and 136, a *praefectus cohortis* and *archidikastes* who later became a member of the Alexandrian Museum.
[172] Suda s.v. Paulus of Tyre. [173] Musurillo 1954: 187.
[174] *P.Oxy.* XVIII 2177 fr. 1 ii.36–7 ([*Pau*]*lou*) and ii.46 (*Pa*[*ulo*]*u*).

features prominently in *P.Oxy.* XVIII 2177 and, like his fellow ambassador in this story, Athamas, may be an Athenian rather than an Alexandrian. The Antoninus who appears in *CPJ* II 158a is presumably the Antoninus accused in *P.Mil.Vogl.* II 47 of instigating something against the Jews in the theatre.[175] A Greek named Anthimus is implicated as an initiator of the violence during the trial, but does not feature in the extant section of the story.[176] The Alexandrian gymnasiarch and ambassador Appian son of Heraclianus from *CPJ* II 159a and b is otherwise unknown. Heliodorus, who speaks to Appian at one point in this story, is apparently a non-Alexandrian member of the embassy.[177] He has been identified as either the father or son of the usurper Avidius Cassius. The father Avidius Heliodorus, who was prefect of Egypt in AD 137–42, would be too old if the dramatic setting of the story is under Commodus. The son of this name was exiled under Marcus Aurelius and executed by Commodus, but would be too young for the apparently aged man in the story.[178]

The dramatic dates of these stories are highly controversial. *CPJ* II 157 is set in Rome during Trajan's reign and follows a period of Graeco-Jewish violence in Alexandria. The Roman setting makes the years AD 99–113 (omitting AD 101–2 and 105–6, when Trajan was campaigning in Dacia) the only possibilities, but the only known Graeco-Jewish violence in Alexandria under Trajan occurred in AD 115–17. Trajan's hostility to the Greeks in *CPJ* II 157 would make sense if the trial is set after the Jewish Revolt, as the Greeks were apparently guilty of provoking the Jews during the uprising in Alexandria.[179] However, Trajan never returned to Rome after the revolt. Nevertheless, the writer may have been unconcerned with, or ignorant of, these facts, and persisted in using the Jewish Revolt as the dramatic setting for his story. *CPJ* II 158a is set at some point after *P.Mil.Vogl.* II 47, an edict dated to 14 October AD 115. In the ensuing period the emperor's special judge, whose imminent arrival was promised in *P.Mil.Vogl.* II 47, had arrived in Alexandria and allegedly punished sixty of the Alexandrian Greeks whose slaves were involved in retaliatory violence. If the emperor is indeed Hadrian, then the trial must post-date his campaigns against the Roxolani in Dacia in AD 119 (see above p. 85), although the grievances reported in the story seem fresh. It is not inconceivable, given the reappearance of the same ambassadors in both stories, that both *CPJ* II 157 and 158 report different parts of the same story. I have already noted that the stories could be amended to emphasise the role of different ambassadors in the stories set

[175] *P.Mil.Vogl.* II 46 cols. i–ii. [176] *CPJ* II 158a ii.4.
[177] *CPJ* II 159b i.12–13 '*your* fatherland'. [178] SHA *Marc.* 26.11, *Avid. Cass.* 13.6.
[179] *P.Mil.Vogl.* II 47 and *CPJ* II 158a. See pp. 56, 59, 76–7, 88–9.

under Claudius.[180] There is no internal evidence of a dramatic date in *P.Oxy.* XVIII 2177, although the appearance of the same ambassadors from *CPJ* II 157 and 158 suggests that it is set either shortly before or after these stories. The dramatic date of *CPJ* II 159 is unclear. There is not enough evidence to connect the story with the persecution of Avidius Cassius' relatives.[181] Internals details are also insufficient to connect it with any historical event from Commodus' reign, such as the corn 'shortage' of AD 190 engineered by the *praefectus urbi*, Papirius Dionysius, to overthrow the Praetorian Prefect, Cleander, or Commodus' alleged reorganisation of the Alexandrian fleet to ensure a regular grain supply to Rome.[182]

The *Acta Alexandrinorum* proper feature various 'documentary' traits. The stories are usually told in the form of trial minutes. Some of the texts also focus primarily on the case at hand and the issues of the day, with documents read out in support of their cases, which suggests that they are based upon a contemporary, and possibly documentary, source.[183] The case and the purpose of the embassy is the focus of *CPJ* II 158a. The Alexandrian Greeks protest against the severity of punishments handed out by the prefect and the special judge referred to in *P.Mil.Vogl.* II 47, and are opposed by a Jewish embassy which considered these punishments too lenient. In the first four columns of *CPJ* II 158a the emperor questions both sets of ambassadors about the events leading up to the violence. Paulus and Theon apparently refer to the incident mentioned in *P.Mil.Vogl.* II 47, involving the theatre and the triumphal parade, apparently a scene similar to the Alexandrians' mockery of King Agrippa I in AD 38, when they staged a mock-parade through Alexandria with a madman Carabas playing the role of Agrippa.[184] In this case an actor apparently played the role of the 'king', who could be one of the messianic leader figures whom the Jews later rallied behind during the Jewish Revolt:

> Paulus gave evidence concerning the 'king' whom they paraded and how he proclaimed 'year one'(?), and Theon read the edict of Lupus, in which he ordered them to bring to him the man from the stage and from the mime mocking the 'king' . . .

The Alexandrian defence is Theon's claim that the prefect Lupus had already dealt with the situation, by arresting the actor who had played the role of the 'king'.

[180] See pp. 38–9. [181] As suggested in *P.Oxy.* I p. 64.
[182] On Papirius Dionysius and Cleander see Dio 72.12–13; Herodian 1.12–13; SHA *Comm.* 6.11–7.1; Suda s.v. *eloidorese*; Whittaker 1964: 348–69. On the fleet see SHA *Comm.* 17.7–8.
[183] E.g. the edicts of Lupus in *CPJ* II 158a and the imperial letter of *P.Oxy.* XVIII 2177.
[184] See p. 13.

In col. ii the Jews accuse the Alexandrians of seizing some Jews from prison and wounding them. The emperor's reply is that he has investigated their claims, and will not punish all the Alexandrians, but only those responsible. The rest of the fragmentary column, tentatively restored on the basis of a third-century recension, *CPJ* II 158b, claims that sixty Alexandrians and their slaves who were responsible for this were punished. The implication is that therefore there is no need for any further punishment:

[Paulus(?)]: 'Emperor, the Alexandrians did not [. . . *roughly 25 letters missing* . . .] many were punished; sixty [Alexandrians and their] slaves. The Alexandrians [were exiled and their slaves(?)] beheaded.[185]

Paulus(?) refers to the mourning for these Alexandrians ('the tears [shed(?)] for all men'), although the Jewish embassy disputes that the slaves involved really were punished:

[Paulus]: 'Now all the slaves who had fled to their masters intending to secure complete safety were brought to justice by them and punished.'
The Jews: 'Lord, they are lying: they do not know how many men there were.'

After a lacuna of unknown length, the trial continues on the recto of the London fragment with the Alexandrian Greeks apparently using complaints against the prefect Lupus to deflect blame from themselves.[186]

However, the case itself is deliberately condensed or omitted in most of the *Acta Alexandrinorum* proper. The business of the embassy is never alluded to in *CPJ* II 157. The extant sections of *P.Oxy.* XVIII 2177 focus on the emperor arguing with the embassy over the presence of non-Alexandrians on it. The text only briefly alludes to the purpose of the embassy: to petition the emperor to 'send back to us these noble men', possibly some exiles, on the grounds that they are simply 'the disciples of Heraius'. All that remains of a case in *CPJ* II 159 is Appian's allegation that the emperor was hoarding grain in order to sell it at an enormous profit. The emperor is angered that Appian has circulated this accusation without being certain of the facts behind it, and orders his execution.[187] After Isidorus has begged Claudius to hear the sufferings of his city, the writer of *CPJ* II 156a instead records Claudius' warning against slandering his friend. Indeed an oblique stroke above the line at this point on the papyrus may well indicate that this section

[185] This citation is from *CPJ* II 158b ll. 5–9. The underlined sections are all that is preserved of this speech in *CPJ* II 158a ii.23–7. Von Premerstein's more plausible supplement (1922: 290) is that the 'Alexandrians, [their slaves having been crucified,] were beheaded'. See also *P.Oxy.* XXII 2339 (above pp. 80–2) on this punishment.

[186] See pp. 76–7 on these complaints.

[187] *CPJ* II 159a ii.1–12.

of the text, dealing with the case itself, has been deliberately omitted.[188] Unlike *CPJ* II 158a, *CPJ* II 158b, the third-century recension of the same story, does not focus on the case. *CPJ* II 158b corresponds roughly with cols. ii–iii of *CPJ* II 158a. Apart from heavily abbreviating most of the direct speech, the writer has omitted the speeches of Hadrian in *CPJ* II 158a ii.1–7 and the Jews in ii.13–21. He therefore omits Hadrian telling the Jews that he knows exactly where the revolt and war began, his naming of the Greek Anthimus as an initiator of violence, and the Jewish side of the argument. The result is that the text is less concerned with the historical issues of the day, and, of course, that the case against the Alexandrians is systematically removed. Consequently readers would be more sympathetic towards the fate of the Alexandrians and their slaves, and consider the emperor more unreasonable in punishing the Alexandrians.

Despite their documentary veneer, the *Acta Alexandrinorum* proper exhibit numerous literary characteristics and use several storytelling devices. The text of *CPJ* II 157 frequently breaks into narrative, and does not adhere strictly to the format of trial minutes. The details of the hearing, the exact setting, the time and date, and the members of Trajan's *consilium* are not listed, as they should be in a documentary record. The participants of *CPJ* II 158a all speak in the form of minutes, although the writer also employs indirect speech and narrative. This particular story often uses the first person plural (e.g. 'After *we* had testified in this way . . .'), and observations such as 'the emperor spoke without deliberation' are clearly intended to give the impression that the writer was personally present at the hearing. While this is not impossible, it is more likely that the writer takes on the role of narrator, similar to the ones found in the Greek novels.

Whereas the case and purpose of the embassies would be central to verbatim copies of documentary records of a trial, the most prominent feature in the *Acta Alexandrinorum* proper are the exchanges between the emperor and the bold Alexandrians. *CPJ* II 157 focuses on the dialogue between a hostile Trajan and the increasingly insolent Hermaiscus. The most memorable exchanges, however, occur in *CPJ* II 159:

> Appian: 'Your father, the divine Antoninus, was fit to be emperor. Listen, you, first of all he was a philosopher, secondly he was not a lover of money, thirdly he was a lover of virtue. But you have precisely the opposite qualities: you are tyrannical, dishonest and crude!'

Appian also calls the emperor a 'brigand-leader' and contrasts his own high birth and nobility with the emperor's apparent lack of culture:

[188] *CPJ* II p. 74 nn. 15–16.

The emperor: 'Do you suggest that I am not noble?'
Appian: 'That I do not know; but I appeal on behalf of my own nobility and my rights.'[189]

Appian may be questioning Commodus' legitimacy as Marcus' son or simply stating that, as a Roman, Commodus is culturally inferior to himself, an Alexandrian Greek.[190] The scene is reminiscent of an exchange in *CPJ* II 156a where Claudius calls Isidorus the son of a slave-girl; the Alexandrian retorts that he is actually a gymnasiarch of Alexandria, whereas the emperor is the cast-off son of a Jewess.[191] The text breaks off with Appian attempting to prove his point by giving the emperor a lesson in Alexandrian history, beginning in the time of Julius Caesar and Cleopatra. Whether Appian intended to list Roman injustices against Alexandria or financial irregularities throughout the Principate is unclear; but his 'account' probably contained further insolence.

The emperors in the *Acta Alexandrinorum* proper tend to be caricatured as hostile and tyrannical judges. The emperor usually receives the embassy in the presence of his *consilium*, which gives the proceedings the outward appearance of a fair hearing, although the stories reveal that the outcome is predetermined. *CPJ* II 157 claims that after both embassies arrived in Rome the Jewish embassy courted the favour of the empress Plotina and persuaded her to turn both the senators in the imperial *consilium* and Trajan against the cause of the Alexandrian Greeks. Plotina was allegedly successful and the Alexandrians entered to a frosty reception.[192] The emperors of *P.Oxy.* XVIII 2177 and *CPJ* II 159 are immediately hostile to the Alexandrian Greeks, without even the presence of an opposing embassy to arouse their anger. The emperor is not explicitly portrayed as a hostile tyrant in *CPJ* II 158a. He even tells the Jewish embassy that he will only punish the Alexandrians who are guilty and orders the Jewish embassy to be silent at one point in the story. Nonetheless, he does appear to side with the Jewish embassy, and it is only the ambassadors of the Alexandrian Greeks who face the threat of execution. However, in the later version of this story, *CPJ* II 158b, several editorial omissions ensure that the characterisation of the emperor is more in keeping with the *Acta Alexandrinorum* proper.[193]

The Jews in the stories are uniformly portrayed as the devious accusers of the Alexandrian Greeks. In *CPJ* II 157 they are portrayed as actively securing

[189] *CPJ* II 159b ii.6–13; v.4–8.
[190] Merkelbach 1994: 471–2 suggests Commodus' legitimacy as Marcus' son is being questioned, citing SHA *Marc.* 19.7 and 29.1–2 as examples of Commodus' mother's fickleness.
[191] *CPJ* II 156d ll. 7–12. [192] See the passage cited on p. 92. [193] See p. 90.

imperial favour and in *CPJ* II 158a they successfully persuade the emperor to punish some of the Alexandrian ambassadors by claiming that 'they are lying'. This portrayal is encapsulated in the following example showing the different receptions enjoyed by Jewish and Greek ambassadors:

> The Jews were the first to enter and greeted the emperor Trajan, who greeted them most cordially in return, having already been won over by Plotina. The Alexandrian ambassadors entered next and greeted the emperor. He however did not receive them kindly but said: 'Do you say "hail" to me as though you deserved to receive a greeting – when you are guilty of such outrages against the Jews!'[194]

In the same way as King Agrippa does not have a speaking role in the 'case of Isidorus, gymnasiarch of Alexandria vs King Agrippa' as reported in *CPJ* II 156a, b and d, the role of the Jews is minimised in the stories. The Jewish ambassadors do not have a speaking role in *CPJ* II 157, and they are not individually named in *CPJ* II 158a; the Greeks Paulus, Theon and Antoninus are opposed by 'the Jews'. The speeches of the Jewish ambassadors are also considerably shorter than those of the Greeks. The stories contain many anti-Jewish sentiments. The Greeks of *CPJ* II 158a refer to their opponents as the 'impious Jews'. Hermaiscus tells Trajan: 'It grieves us to see your imperial council filled with impious Jews', and: 'Is the name of the Jews not offensive? You should therefore help your own people [i.e. nobles] rather than play advocate for the impious Jews!'[195] The Jews do not feature in the stories dramatically set after the resolution of the issues concerning the Jewish Revolt.

A fleeting appearance by the imperial *consilium* is common in these stories. The *consilium* had played an important role in the story of the trial of Isidorus, with *CPJ* II 156a col. i relating the advice given to Claudius by two senators. In other stories the role of the council is minimised. It is claimed in *CPJ* II 157 that Plotina had turned the *consilium* against the Alexandrians, which prompted Hermaiscus to exclaim that Trajan's council was full of Jews. This is not strictly the case as only four senators with Jewish ancestry are attested in this period, and three of these men were descendants of Herod Agrippa.[196] Like the claim of Isidorus, that Claudius was the son of a Jewess, this remark was probably symbolic rather than literal, explaining the alleged pro-Jewish stance of the council. In *P.Oxy.* XVIII 2177 the emperor discusses at least some of the matters with his council:

[194] *CPJ* II 157 ii.16–19. [195] *CPJ* II 157 iii.4–6, 10–13.

[196] Smallwood 1976: 391 n. 8. There may have been more, however, if there is any historicity behind Domitian charging prominent Roman nobles with 'drifting into Jewish ways' – Dio 67.14.1–2, 68.1.1–2; Suet. *Dom.* 12.2.

'Caesar read the letter which they had written and recalled the senators and his private friends.'[197] The writer of *CPJ* II 159 incorrectly uses the word 'Senate' to mean 'council' when Appian asks the emperor who has recalled him from execution.[198] With the exception of *CPJ* II 156, the *consilium* never has a speaking role or acts independently from the emperor. It is almost as though the writers understood that an imperial *consilium* would be present at a trial, but were either unsure of, or uninterested in, its role and composition.

The most prominent caricature in the *Acta Alexandrinorum* proper is that of the Alexandrian ambassadors. These men are uniformly portrayed as brave and patriotic heroes who are willing to die in the service of their city. The noble birth and descent, and high culture and status (εὐγένεια), of the Alexandrian Greeks are frequently alluded to in their exchanges with emperors:

Caesar said: 'This is the second time I am telling you, Hermaiscus. You are answering me insolently, taking advantage of your birth!'

Appian: 'I appeal on behalf of my noble rank and my rights.'
The emperor: 'How so?'
Appian: 'As a noble and a gymnasiarch.'[199]

The Alexandrians frequently emphasise their patriotism. Antoninus calls Alexandria 'our well-named city' in *CPJ* II 158a. Isidorus claims to be a gymnasiarch of the 'glorious city of Alexandria'. Both Appian and Isidorus are led off to execution in their robes of office, symbolising their love of their city and that they are dying as representatives of Alexandria:

Caesar then ordered him to be led away to execution. As Appian was being led away he said: 'Grant me but one thing, Lord Caesar.'
The emperor: 'What?'
Appian: 'Grant that I may be executed in my noble insignia!'
The emperor: 'Granted.'
Appian then took his head band, placed it on his head and put his white shoes on his feet . . .[200]

Appian is explicitly said to be dying on behalf of his 'dearest fatherland' by Heliodorus (see below).

Great emphasis is placed on the glorious deaths of the brave Alexandrians on behalf of their city. The dramatic death scene is most developed in

[197] *P.Oxy.* XVIII 2177 fr. II ii.5–10. [198] *CPJ* II 159b iv.7–8.
[199] *CPJ* II 157 iii.6–8; *CPJ* II 159b iv.15–v.4.
[200] *CPJ* II 159b ii.13–iii.7; on Isidorus see *CPJ* II 156b ii.7–10.

CPJ II 159. Appian, apparently like Isidorus in *CPJ* II 156a, b and d, was led away to execution and recalled several times in the story, prolonging the scene for additional effect. On one such occasion

> he [Appian] saw Heliodorus and said: 'Have you nothing to say, Heliodorus, at my being led away to execution?'
>
> Heliodorus said: 'To whom can we speak, if we have no one who will listen? On, my son, go to your death! Yours shall be the glory of dying for your dearest fatherland (*patris*)! Do not be distressed . . .'[201]

The emphasis on the hopelessness of the Alexandrians' cause is a literary device to heighten their bravery. Heliodorus highlights the futility of Appian's appeal in terms very similar to Lampon's final aside to Isidorus.[202] Appian's actual execution is not reported in the text but allegedly caused great turmoil in Rome. Dressed in his robes of office, Appian was led through Rome as he called out:

> Come, Romans, and see the spectacle of a lifetime! An Alexandrian gymnasiarch and ambassador led away to execution![203]

The writer alleges that this caused the 'Romans (to) murmur in complaint', forcing the emperor to recall Appian again. Appian is also unlikely to have been the only victim of this Alexandrian embassy. At one point he passes a corpse, who appears familiar to him:

> He [Appian] saw a dead body and said: 'Ah dead one, when I reach my country I shall tell Heraclianus my father [. . . .]'[204]

Heliodorus' proximity to the corpse could also suggest that he was to face a similar punishment.

Few of the *Acta Alexandrinorum* proper are preserved beyond the pronouncement of an impending execution. The emperor's verdict is announced in *CPJ* II 158a and implies that Paulus only narrowly escaped execution:

> Caesar: 'Let Paulus go; but have Antoninus bound!'[205]

The texts then reports the torture of Antoninus in very dramatic terms. There is no reason to believe that he was tortured for information, as

[201] *CPJ* II 159b i.6–14.
[202] *CPJ* II 156d ll. 14–15: 'Lampon: "We might as well give in to a deranged king."'
[203] *CPJ* II 159b iii.5–11. Hermaiscus' death scene, like Appian's, was allegedly accompanied by great turmoil and unrest in Rome, see below p. 95.
[204] *CPJ* II 159a ii.13–b i.1.
[205] *CPJ* II 158 vi.28–vii.1.

Musurillo thought. It was standard Roman practice to torture the condemned prior to execution.[206] Antoninus suffered the brutal punishment known as the 'wooden horse' (*equus*), but other Alexandrians also appear to have suffered:

> They [the soldiers?] leapt towards us . . . when Antoninus was bound, the emperor's [magistrates] ordered them [the soldiers?] to punish the ca[ptives] and to [suspend] Antoninus from the wooden beam and to burn his bones [with fire] and torture [him] . . .[207]

The last column of *CPJ* II 157 refers to chains (*des*[*moi*]), suggesting that Hermaiscus is chained prior to execution. The outcome of the embassy in *P.Oxy*. XVIII 2177 is unclear, but the mention of an execution ([θά]νατο[ς]) suggests that the story ended in the same way as other *Acta Alexandrinorum* proper, with at least some of the ambassadors facing martyrdom.

A further literary element can be detected in *CPJ* II 157, recalling the Serapis aretalogical literature popular in Alexandria, which features in several pieces of related literature.[208] It is alleged that both sets of ambassadors had taken along their 'gods' with them. The Alexandrians carried a bust of Serapis, the Jews probably carried some sacred scrolls. A miracle later interrupts the trial of Hermaiscus. The bust of Serapis began to sweat allegedly causing panic and tumult in Rome, with the populace fleeing to the hills.[209] The intervention appears to save Hermaiscus temporarily:

> As Hermaiscus was saying this sweat suddenly broke out on the bust of Serapis which the ambassadors carried and Trajan was astounded when he saw it. And soon tumultuous crowds gathered in Rome and numerous shouts were raised and everyone began to flee to the highest parts of the hills . . .[210]

Events in the stories of the *Acta Alexandrinorum* proper have been deliberately adapted to parallel each other. The ambassadors of the *Acta Alexandrinorum* proper are well aware of Alexandrian 'history' and the fate of previous ambassadors. *CPJ* II 157 refers to something that happened 'in the time of the divine Claudius', possibly the execution of Isidorus and Lampon, and Appian explicitly makes the connection:

> Appian: 'Who has recalled me when I was about to greet Death again, and those who have died before me, Theon and Isidorus and Lampon?'[211]

[206] Musurillo 1954: 193; cf. the punishment of Jesus prior to his execution, pp. 156–8.
[207] *CPJ* II 158a vii.1–8. [208] See pp. 67–8, 95.
[209] Statues sweating or displaying sentient abilities was a bad omen; e.g. Verg. *Aen*. 2.173–4; Suet. *Calig*. 57.1.
[210] *CPJ* II 157 iii.13–19. [211] *CPJ* II 159b iv.2–7.

Episodes in the stories are deliberately adapted to mirror other episodes from Alexandrian history. The Alexandrian Greek and Jewish envoys in *CPJ* II 157 sailed to Rome immediately after winter, a winter undoubtedly as stormy as the one which preceded the Greek and Jewish embassies to Gaius in which Philo participated. The parading and mocking of a Jewish 'king' ignited the violence in *CPJ* II 158a as it had done in AD 38. The complaint of Antoninus in *CPJ* II 158a that the prefect had settled the Jews in a section of the city strongly recalls Flaccus' settlement in AD 38. I have discussed above the numerous occasions on which the Alexandrian ambassadors, the emperors and the Jews speak and act in the same way. Musurillo also observed other linguistic and stylistic similarities between these stories.[212]

CONCLUSIONS

Relations between Alexandria and Rome during the Principate inspired a great deal of literature in Roman Egypt. The most popular and enduring example of this literature are the *Acta Alexandrinorum* proper, discussed here and in chapter 2. These dramatic stories of the trials of noble Alexandrians in the imperial court contain numerous fictitious elements although they feature a cast of historical characters and are presented as if they were the authentic minutes of an actual hearing. The writers were familiar with other similar literary forms and adapted their stories to parallel each other closely. The result is that the same basic story structure is applied to each trial scene and that the emperor, Alexandrians and Jews become caricatured and usually play the same stock role in each story. Nonetheless, the stories do not form a neat, homogenous group, and even among the core group of texts there is considerable variation of content, tone and emphasis. The story structure could be adapted to accommodate anomalies. For example, in the stories set after the AD 120s the emperor plays the role of accuser as well as judge in the absence of the Jews. Some writers adopted a more historical approach, while others deliberately omitted details which they considered superfluous, such as the names of the emperor's advisors, the exact setting, the circumstances of the trial and even the case itself. Some stories have no anti-Jewish overtones and do not deliberately portray the emperor in a negative manner. In some stories the Alexandrian Greeks do not lose. In fact, the only common theme running through the *Acta Alexandrinorum* proper is the glorification of the city and its brave heroes.

[212] Musurillo 1954: 211.

The writers adopted the form of trial minutes for their stories, but it is difficult to escape the conclusion that, although the stories may have some historical basis, they are fiction cased in the form of documents.

On the fringes of this core group of texts are a number of stories which are closely related to the *Acta Alexandrinorum* proper in terms of form, content and tone. The trials set in Alexandria focus on the punishment and execution of the Alexandrians involved. The stories concerning the prosecutions of the prefects are dramatic and share the same documentary veneer as the *Acta Alexandrinorum* proper. The primary focus of these stories is often on the members of the Alexandrian embassy who have travelled to Rome and are portrayed as bravely risking their lives by prosecuting a friend of the emperor on behalf of their fatherland. In some cases, such as *CPJ* II 158a, the accusations against the prefect are made in the context of the Alexandrians being tried.

Other texts which are closely related to the *Acta Alexandrinorum* proper are the official 'documents' which were copied and circulated around the *chora*, the traditions about imperial visits to Alexandria, and the records of Alexandrian embassies to Rome. Verbatim copies of such records could serve practical purposes. Some examples of the *Acta* related literature appear to be accurate copies of documents, full of contemporary and historical detail. However, many of the texts exhibit literary characteristics in their current form and appear to have been circulated around Egypt as literature, satisfying the local interest in happenings in the imperial court, in political relations between Alexandria and Rome, and the Graeco-Jewish altercations in Alexandria. Even those texts displaying few fictional traits fulfilled this function. An apparently genuine copy of Augustus' letter to the Alexandrians would have been sufficient to serve a pragmatic function, but the copyist of *P.Oxy*. XLII 3020 was interested in the story of the embassy and chose to copy the minutes of the embassy's reception as well. Indeed, it is difficult to find a practical purpose for such accounts of unsuccessful embassies or for records of imperial receptions in Alexandria outside the Alexandrian elite from whom embassies were composed. But the Alexandrian nobility was not the exclusive audience of the *Acta* related literature.[213] Although these texts do not conform to my definition of the *Acta Alexandrinorum* proper, the similarities in form and content suggest that they belong to the same storytelling tradition.

The state of this storytelling tradition is such that it is often impossible to categorise a text as either a document or a literary creation. This suggests

[213] See pp. 112–19.

that the literature originally developed from a documentary foundation, with writers adding their own personal touches to the texts and making further editorial amendments which modified the stories to agree with their personal sympathies, usually the cause of the unsuccessful Alexandrians. The writers of some stories however may have retained the format of what had become an established and popular genre, but not necessarily the documentary foundation.[214]

[214] See pp. 99–112 for further discussion of the documentary origin of the *Acta Alexandrinorum* literature.

CHAPTER 4

The Acta Alexandrinorum*: The historical background*

In this chapter I will examine the historical background to the *Acta Alexandrinorum* literature. I will initially explore the origins of the literature by looking at the possibility that documents, such as trial minutes, were among the sources used by its writers, who I will suggest may have been Alexandrian Greek ambassadors. I will then focus on the extent to which the *Acta Alexandrinorum* should be considered dissident literature by looking at the readership of the stories and comparing them with known literary expressions of dissent from Roman Egypt, such as mimes and oracles. I will propose that the *Acta Alexandrinorum* may not have been a unique Alexandrian phenomenon by looking at similar literary production from other Greek centres which had close links to Alexandria. I will end by challenging the view that events in Alexandria under the Severans led to a surge in popularity of the stories and their subsequent decline.

THE SOURCES OF THE *ACTA ALEXANDRINORUM* LITERATURE

Justin and Tertullian, two second-century AD Christian writers, refer to a document called the *Acta Pilati*, a copy of the minutes taken at the trial of Jesus, which Pilate allegedly subsequently sent to Tiberius in Rome.[1] The historicity of this story and the existence of such a document is questionable. Nonetheless, these writers assumed that minutes of the trial (*acta*) would have been recorded and that a copy of the document would have been stored among the emperor's papers (the imperial *commentarii*) in Rome, where it could be accessed. Wilcken originally thought that the *Acta Alexandrinorum* were copied directly from the imperial *commentarii* stored in Rome due to the official tone of the first few fragments which were discovered and the appearance of several Latin words transliterated into Greek in the texts (e.g. ματρῶνα).[2] Wilcken later modified this view, conceding that the texts

[1] Justin *I Apol.* 35, 48; Tert. *Apol.* 5.2, 21.24.

[2] Wilcken 1895: 481–98.

showed signs of a fictional framework and later editing and that some texts, such as *CPJ* II 159, were unlikely to be based on a documentary source at all.[3] Nonetheless, Wilcken argued that the amount of contemporary detail in the texts proved that they were based upon some documentary sources. The general consensus, as argued by Musurillo, is that the *Acta Alexandrinorum* stories were based on the official trial minutes stored in Rome, which were reworked to a greater or lesser extent by later writers.[4]

There is evidence that minutes were made and kept for trials that were heard in Roman Egypt and that this practice followed the procedure in operation for trials heard in the imperial court and senate. The problem therefore becomes one of accessibility, and whether the assumption that emperors would allow copies of their own records to be taken by either the victorious or the aggrieved party is plausible. Musurillo's suggestion, that the Alexandrians may have obtained the records by bribing those who had access to them, as later Christians allegedly did, is not wholly convincing.[5] I will also examine an alternative possibility, that the Alexandrian ambassadors made their own records, and assess the availability of such records within Alexandria's city archives.

Trial minutes were taken and kept in Roman Egypt. The Alexandrian ambassador Lampon once had the job of recording the minutes of trials heard by the prefect.[6] Hundreds of surviving papyri contain the minutes of hearings before magistrates from Roman Egypt and reveal the standardised way in which trial minutes were recorded. There are four sections in a typical trial record: an introduction (*caput*), the body of the trial, the judgement of the magistrate (*krisis*), and any other concluding matters.[7]

The introductory sections tended to begin with an extract phrase, stating where the record was copied from. The most common formulae used in Roman Egypt were 'from the minutes' or 'copy of the minutes' of the presiding magistrate, whose name and full list of titles were then usually given.[8] The record was dated, usually in the Greek form of 'year *x* of *x* Caesar, month *x*, day *x*', rather than a Roman consular dating.[9] The location of the trial was indicated, sometimes very specifically.[10] There was usually a 'presence' phrase, listing those who attended the hearing.[11] The introductory formula usually ended by presenting the participants in the trial. The most common formula, and the only one found in trial records

[3] Wilcken 1909: 783–839. [4] Musurillo 1954: 251–2.
[5] Musurillo 1954: 252 n. 1. See also Bisbee 1988: 28–32. [6] Philo *Flacc*. 131.
[7] For full details see Coles 1966; Bisbee 1988; Haensch 1992: 209–317. [8] E.g. *SB* V 8261.
[9] E.g. *BGU* II 587 l. 1. [10] E.g. *BGU* I 347 'in Memphis'; *SB* V 8261 'in the temple'.
[11] E.g. *P.Fouad* 21.

of the first century AD, was 'the case of *x* against (πρός) *y*.'[12] Over the course of the second and third centuries, other more elaborate formulae became common, such as ἐπὶ τῶν κατὰ *x* πρὸς *y*.[13]

The body of the trial was most usually recorded by writing down what the participants said in direct speech, although occasionally a narrative summary is given instead. This was presented in the first century AD by recording the speaker's name followed by direct speech, or, after *c.* AD 130, with the speech introduced by a verb of saying, usually εἶπεν. In the third century, the abbreviation εἶπ (= εἶπεν) was often employed.[14] The record of the hearing therefore follows the pattern: '*x* said: ". . ." *y* said: ". . ."' Lengthy legal arguments or unimportant speeches are usually summarised using indirect speech. The magistrates often ordered documents to be read out as evidence, usually using a form of the verb ἀναγιγνώσκω.[15] The judgement was usually presented in direct speech in a concise and abrupt manner.

Scribes did not record every single word that was said at the hearing. This was possible, theoretically, through the use of shorthand.[16] However, if everything that was said at a trial was recorded, the minutes would be extremely long, yet our records would only take a few minutes at most to read. Coles argues that although scribes probably did record the entire speeches of advocates, they compressed them when writing up the minutes. A comparison between the trial records and surviving 'N' documents, the actual briefs prepared for a case, confirms that the speeches in official proceedings are summaries.[17] Scribes therefore only wrote down the basic gist of the lengthy speeches. The use of direct speech was an artificial device introduced by a third party to shorten the record.[18]

These records served very practical purposes. The parties involved could use a copy of the minutes as evidence of the judgement, and future generations used the records as legal precedents.[19] Because most of the extant trial minutes from Roman Egypt are private copies, it would appear that they were easily obtainable. In a second-century AD hearing, for example, a certain Dionysia was able to produce three earlier trial records, dating from AD 87, 128 and 135, as precedents to support her case. Extracts from an account of expenditure show that records could be retrieved from libraries for a small fee:

[12] E.g. *P.Oxy.* I 37. [13] E.g. *P.Oxy.* II 237. [14] Bisbee 1988: 55. [15] E.g. *P.Fam.Tebt.* 19.
[16] Plut. *Cat. Min.* 23 claims that Cicero introduced shorthand to Rome. Sen. *Apocol.* 9 is the first evidence for shorthand under the Principate. *P.Brem.* 82, written during Trajan's reign, is the first attested example of Greek shorthand on papyrus.
[17] See Hanson 1971: 15–27. [18] Coles 1966: 15–19. [19] Katzoff 1972: 256–92.

. . . To notaries for writing two *commentarii* 16 obols . . . To a searcher of the Prefect's library, 10 obols . . . to search for two *commentarii* of the *archidikastes*, 4 obols . . . for the *commentarii* of Munatius Felix . . . and for an extract . . .[20]

The vast majority of the surviving trial minutes from Egypt concern cases of civil law. There is only one extant example, to my knowledge, from the trial minutes of a criminal case, where the defendant(s) appear(s) to be facing torture and execution.[21] This example suggests that the minutes of cases concerning criminal law were recorded identically to cases of civil law:

Archias(?) commanded that he should be tortured and said: 'Tell the truth! Were . . . in the company of the brigands . . . ?'
He answered: 'We told because of much torture.'
Archias said: 'Whom, then, from the village. . . .'

There is also evidence for the taking of minutes in the imperial court. In 6 BC Augustus had the slaves of an accused man questioned by torture and subsequently wrote to the Cnidians stating: 'I have sent you also [a copy of] the interrogations themselves.'[22]

Tiberius had the minutes of Drusus' last hours recorded, to show how his grandson had denounced him.[23] Nero published the confessions of the Pisonian conspirators.[24]

Jurists often cite the minutes of hearings involving the emperor. Marcellus reports a hearing before Marcus Aurelius in AD 166:

Vibius Zeno said: 'I beg you, Lord Emperor, to hear me patiently; what will you decide about the legacies?'
Antoninus Caesar said: 'Do you think that the testator wished his will to be valid when he erased the names of the heirs?'
Cornelius Priscianus the advocate of Leo said: 'It was the names only of the heirs he erased.'[25]

The *Codex Iustinianus* cites in direct speech the words spoken by Caracalla to a certain Julianus in the imperial court, suggesting that the source is the minutes of the hearing:

Antoninus Augustus said to him: 'I restore to you your province with all your rights', and added, 'moreover that you may know what it means to be restored to all your rights, I hereby reinstate you in your offices, your rank and all your other privileges.'[26]

[20] *P.Oxy.* XIV 1654. [21] *P.Ant.* II 87 (late third century AD).
[22] *GC* 6 ll. 27–8. [23] Tac. *Ann.* 6.23–4. [24] Tac. *Ann.* 15.73.
[25] *Dig.* 28.4.3. See Brunt 1966: 80–1. [26] *Cod. Iust.* 9.51.1.

There is further evidence from the fourth century AD. The record of Diocletian's reception of an embassy from Antioch begins with the phrase 'part of the *acta* of the Augusti Diocletian and Maximian'. The abbreviated minutes of the speech of the Antiochene spokesman and Diocletian's response are then given.[27] The minutes of a hearing before Constantine are also recorded, with Constantine speaking in Latin and a female litigant speaking in Greek.[28]

The historical sources of the Principate frequently refer to the emperor's papers (*commentarii*). The term *commentarii* covers a range of written notes, including, for example, schools pupils' notes, diaries, household accounts and transactions. A passage from the *Tabula Banasitana* suggests that the imperial *commentarii* were an extensive record and hints at the detail which they contained. In it Marcus Aurelius and Commodus asked a procurator for information that could 'be recorded in our *commentarii*'. An extract from the imperial *commentarii* follows, recording the grant of Roman citizenship to various members of a tribe called the Zegrenses, which is authenticated by the statement: 'Copied down and checked from the *commentarii* of persons granted Roman citizenship.' Appended below are the names of the *libertus* who made the copy and twelve imperial *amici* who witnessed this. The prelude to the extract gives the precise date of the grant (6 July AD 177), and the place where it was granted, Rome.[29] A natural reading of the sources suggests that emperors kept trial records among their documents. Gaius allegedly burnt the *commentarii* relating to the trials of his relatives under Tiberius.[30] Nero ignored Suillius' plea that he had acted as a prosecutor at Claudius' bequest because he had read in Claudius' *commentarii* that Claudius never instigated accusations against anyone.[31] In AD 70 Junius Mauricus suggested to Domitian that the imperial *commentarii* should be made available to the Senate, so that the names of accusers could be known.[32] Domitian allegedly read nothing except the papers and minutes (*commentarii et acta*) of Tiberius.[33] When a man petitioned Hadrian to release his father from exile, Hadrian replied: 'Let me look up the *commentarii*, while you make it your business to approach me again.'[34] During his governorship Pliny doubted the authenticity of some documents that were presented to him, including an Augustan edict and some imperial letters. He consulted Trajan, because the emperor would have genuine copies in

[27] *Ibid*. 10.47.2. [28] *Cod. Theod*. 8.15.1.
[29] The *Tabula Banasitana*: see Sherwin-White 1973: 86–98 and Williams 1975: 37–78.
[30] Suet. *Calig*. 15.1; Dio 59.4.3; 10.8; 16.3. [31] Tac. *Ann*. 13.43.
[32] Tac. *Hist*. 4.40. [33] Suet. *Dom*. 20.
[34] One of the *Sententiae Hadriani* in *Corp. Gloss. Lat*. III 33.26–36. See also Lewis 1991: 267–80.

his *scrinia* (collection of letters or books). Trajan replied that he had found nothing relevant in the *commentarii* of his predecessors.[35]

The evidence therefore suggests that minutes of hearings in the imperial court were taken and stored in the same way as they were in Roman Egypt. In all probability, the magistrates of Roman Egypt adopted central imperial practice for recording minutes, which would explain why dialogue was recorded in indirect speech in Ptolemaic Egypt but in direct speech in the imperial period.

Another possible central official Roman source for the *Acta Alexandrinorum* could be the *acta senatus*, although this could only apply when proceedings took place in the Senate. *Ch.L.A.* IV 268, which tells the story of an Alexandrian embassy speaking to Commodus on the subject of a *boule*, begins with the phrase 'from the acts of the Senate' (*ex actis in sen*[*at*]*u*).[36] Little is known about the form, content and circulation of the *acta senatus*. In 59 BC Julius Caesar arranged to have the *acta senatus* and the *acta* of the people made public: '[Caesar] was the very first person to arrange that daily records of the Senate and people should be compiled and published.'[37] Suetonius also tells us that Augustus limited the circulation of the *acta senatus*.[38] By the time of Nero, the record was apparently circulated in the provinces. Thrasea Paetus' accuser mentions: 'In every province and army, the journal of the Roman people (*diurna populi Romani*) is read with special care to see what Thrasea has refused to do!'[39] Responsibility for the maintenance of the record presumably lay with the holder of the office *ab actis senatus*, a post first attested in AD 29, when it was held by Junius Rusticus.

The scattered references to the record suggest that it was a full, detailed account of all business that took place in the Senate. Suetonius mentions that the trial of C. Laetorius was 'recorded in the *acta senatus*'.[40] Tacitus mentions that he found Anicius Cerealis' proposal to erect a temple to Nero in 'the *commentarii* of the senate'.[41] Pliny informed Tacitus of an event that might be worthy of inclusion in his histories: 'I am sending you this account although the incident can hardly have escaped your watchful eye, since it appears in the *publica acta*.'[42] Fronto stated that he needed to honour Marcus Aurelius with an oration, so that his praise 'should not lie hidden away in the *acta senatus*'.[43]

It seems most likely that the *acta senatus* would have followed the model of imperial minute-taking, recording the proceedings in heavily abbreviated

[35] Plin. *Ep.* 10.65–6. [36] See p. 71.
[37] Suet. *Iul.* 20. White 1997: 73–84. On the *populi diurna acta* see Baldwin 1979: 189–203.
[38] Suet. *Aug.* 36. [39] Tac. *Ann.* 16.22. [40] Suet. *Aug.* 5.
[41] Tac. *Ann.* 15.74. [42] Plin. *Ep.* 7.33. [43] Fronto *Ad M. Caes.* 2.1.1.

direct speech. The appearance of the word *dixit* in *Ch.L.A.* IV 268 suggests that this section of the *acta senatus* contained edited speeches, written in the form of minutes. Tacitus' description of Junius Rusticus implies that an *ab actis senatus* had an editorial function: '[Rusticus was] chosen by the emperor to write up the Senate's proceedings and thus believed to have insight into the recesses of his mind.'[44] The *SC de Cn. Pisone* suggests that senatorial business was recorded following the practice used in the imperial *commentarii*. The extract begins by giving a date (the fourth day before the Ides of March), a place (the portico near the temple of Apollo) and a list of those present at the writing. The most important speeches, such as those of the emperor, may have been recorded verbatim; those of less important figures edited and compressed. We should note that the only surviving example of *acta* from ancient Rome, the *acta* of the Arval brethren, are not rigidly standardised into one form or another, and the *acta senatus* may not have been either.[45]

Ch.L.A. IV 268 shows that the *acta senatus* were accessible in the provinces. It has been suggested that several papyri from Roman Egypt and an inscription from Dmeir in Syria were copied from the imperial *commentarii*, which would suggest that the latter were equally accessible in the provinces. *P.Oxy.* XLVII 3361 appears to be an extract of a trial in the imperial court, translated from a Latin original, which makes the imperial *commentarii* a possible source. *P.Oxy.* XLII 3019 is a copy of a verdict given by Severus in Alexandria on 9 May AD 200 to an embassy from a Greek *metropolis*. Although the text is written in Greek, it uses a Roman date formula, suggesting that it was adapted from a Latin original, the most likely source being the emperor's own *commentarii*.[46] Two papyri reporting a response of Caracalla on the subject of the *monodesmia* tax record the speeches of an advocate Egnatius Lollianus and Caracalla in the form of abbreviated direct speech and may also derive from the imperial *commentarii*.[47] *SB* IV 7366 preserves a decision by Severus and Caracalla on the old claims of the *fiscus*.[48] The fragment of the copy ends with a statement of authenticity, similar to that in the *Tabula Banasitana*. Pompeius Liberalis has checked the document, and five Romans, one of whom was an imperial procurator in Egypt, have attached

[44] Tac. *Ann.* 5.4.

[45] On the *acta senatus* see Talbert 1984: 303–37; on the Arval *acta* see Beard 1985: 114–62.

[46] *P.Oxy.* XLII pp. 67–9.

[47] *P.Mich.* IX 529 ll. 25–38, *P.Berol.* inv. 7216 (with photograph in *Aegyptus* 45, 1965, plate 8). The two are republished as *GC* 267. On these papyri see Świderek 1975: 293–8; Lewis 1976: 320–30; 1980: 127–33; 1987: 49–53; Oliver 1978: 139–40; 1981: 133–6. The wording of the two texts is not identical, suggesting that one of the two is an imperfect copy, or indeed that both of them are.

[48] *P.Berol.* inv. 7346 was first published in Frisk 1928: 282–4, then as *SB* IV 7366, then *GC* 243.

their seals to it. While Oliver thought that the document was an authenticated copy of an imperial rescript, Williams has suggested that it is an official transcription of an oral pronouncement by Severus, taken from the imperial *commentarii*.[49]

Two columns of an inscription from Dmeir report the minutes of a hearing before Caracalla in AD 216.[50] The introductory formula is given in Latin. The dating formula is clearly Roman, and even Roman abbreviations, such as *VE* (*viri eminentissimi*), are used. Although the parties speak in Greek, the speakers are always introduced with the Latin verb *dixit*. The Latin source and the form of the record have led commentators to identify the inscription as a copy from imperial *commentarii*.[51]

The interest in the Dmeir inscription is not just the possible origin of the record. The speakers, like those in the *Acta Alexandrinorum* stories, are discourteous to the emperor during the course of the hearing. The extant section of the inscription contains a debate between two advocates, Lollianus and Aristaenetus, on the validity of Caracalla even hearing the case. The prefect had already passed a ruling on the case, which made a direct appeal to the emperor technically inadmissible. Aristaenetus objects to Caracalla hearing the case abruptly. The case should not be heard, he argues, but Caracalla has said 'if you wish me to hear it, I will hear it'. This criticism annoys Caracalla:

> [Caracalla said:] 'Does he say "I find fault with you" to the emperor? Do you not wish me to hear this matter?'
> Aristaenetus said: 'That is what I say.'

When Caracalla asks him in what respects he could be criticised for hearing the case, Aristaenetus then decides to remain silent and allow his rival Lollianus to speak.

The orators were both members of the imperial court. Egnatius Lollianus began his career as a *legatus Augusti* in Galatia in AD 218, was Prefect of the City in AD 254, and is called 'first of the orators' in inscriptions.[52] Julius Aristaenetus may be the C. Sallius Aristaenetus, a *curator viae* and *iuridicus*, who is called 'the greatest orator' in an inscription.[53] Their familiarity with Caracalla may be why their outspokenness was tolerated. Nonetheless, the example shows that rudeness could occur in the imperial court, and, if the inscription does indeed derive from an official source, that such insolence was recorded in the official minutes.

[49] Oliver 1976: 370–2; Williams 1976: 235–45.
[50] *SEG* XVII 759; Roussel and de Vischer 1942–3: 173–200; Oliver 1974: 289–94; Williams 1974a: 663–7.
[51] E.g. Crook 1955: 82–4.
[52] *SEG* II 652 ll. 8–10.
[53] *ILS* 2934. Philostr. *VS* 2.11 mentions a Byzantine orator named Aristaenetus.

However, it is not entirely certain that these documents were copied from the imperial *commentarii*. The method of recording minutes was so standardised in this period that anyone who was familiar with the form of records could produce their own minutes. There are three extant versions of a hearing before the prefect Caecina Tuscus concerning the status of army veterans in Egypt in September AD 63. Two are copies of official versions, and one is unofficial, presumably made by a participant.[54] The official version gives the date of 4 September AD 63, gives the venue as the Great Atrium, lists those present, and gives Tuscus' verdict in direct speech. The unofficial version records a series of meetings with Tuscus.[55] For 4 September it is recorded that the veterans met Tuscus in the Great Atrium, and Tuscus' words are again recorded in direct speech. While the gist of the two versions of Tuscus' speech is similar, the unofficial version is blunter. The official version omits, for example, Tuscus' parting comment to the veterans: 'Dismiss, each to his home, and don't be idle!' The unofficial version and one of the official ones come from the archive of a first-century AD army veteran, L. Pompeius Niger, who may have been one of the petitioners. Niger needed a copy of Tuscus' judgement as evidence of his personal status. He presumably wrote the unofficial version himself, or acquired it from a fellow petitioner, to act as evidence of his status until he could obtain the official version. Niger, like anyone else familiar with what trial minutes looked like, could very easily produce his own minutes.

Therefore it remains impossible to tell if any of the 'documents' discussed above really were derived from the emperor's records, or were made by participants. In any case, all the extant supposed extracts from the imperial *commentarii* concern matters of civil law, which the emperors may well have been prepared to hand over to participants. Although the Romans did not make sharp distinctions between 'civil' and 'criminal' law, the emperor's records of capital trials may have been less accessible. After all, the emperor's court acquired a reputation as a place where matters were 'brought to light and concealed'.[56] Tacitus' surprise that Tiberius published the verbatim minutes of Drusus' death suggests that emperors only rarely did this, and only when they had something to gain. In this case, Tiberius wanted to prove that his grandson's death was warranted (p. 102). Detailed records of proceedings in Rome and in the imperial court could find their way to the provinces. *P.Köln* VI 249, from the Fayum, is an apparently verbatim copy of Augustus' funeral oration for Agrippa, delivered in the Roman forum in 12 BC.[57] We also have bronze tablets from Spain containing the *senatus*

[54] Official – *P.Fouad* 21; *SB* VIII 9668 preserves the end of a copy of this text, with a few slight variations. Unofficial – *SB* V 8247.

[55] See Welles 1938: 41–9. [56] Philostr. *VA* 7.17. [57] Dio 54.28.3–4.

consulta detailing honours passed for Germanicus in AD 19, and one containing the official version of the trial of the elder Piso for the murder of Germanicus.[58] However, these documents were officially distributed around the empire, to honour Augustus' friend Agrippa and to assuage the evident public interest in the trial of the 'murderer' of the popular Germanicus. The *SC de Cn. Pisone* was published in Rome on 10 December AD 20 by the senate at the request of Tiberius. A *subscriptio* was added by Tiberius, and it was sent to provincial governors – such as N. Vibius Serenus in Baetica, who published the text and arranged for other copies of it to be distributed and displayed in the province. Emperors had nothing to gain from publishing the trials of the Alexandrians, and there is therefore no reason to believe that they would.

Like other ancient cities, Alexandria would have made and kept records of the city's dealings with emperors. The city of Aphrodisias, for example, inscribed a selection of imperial letters going back to the Augustan period onto a third-century 'archive wall' in their theatre.[59] The large number of surviving imperial letters to cities in Roman Egypt suggests that they were archived and were accessible in the province.[60] The Alexandrians also recorded and preserved records of important events taking place in the city. The 'minutes of the honours' of Titus' visit to Alexandria were recorded and sent to Adrastus and Sparticus.[61] Several texts, discussed in chapter 3, appear to be based upon similar records.[62] The 'minutes of the honours' for Titus' visit may have been made by an interested bystander. Nevertheless, official documents of such events were kept, presumably in the form of minutes, and archived among the city's records, where they served a very practical purpose. The Alexandrian Greek embassy to Claudius in AD 41 used Alexandria's reception of Germanicus as an example of their loyalty to the emperor's family, and through this attempted to win Claudius' favour. Claudius' response may indicate that the embassy had actually read out a version of Germanicus' speech to support their claim:

> To pass over other instances [i.e. of Alexandrian devotion to the imperial family] and mention the latest, the best witness is my brother, Germanicus Caesar, who addressed you in the most sincere language.[63]

[58] *Tabulae Siarensis* and *Hebana*; on the *SC de Cn. Pisone* see Griffin 1997: 249–63.
[59] Reynolds 1982; cf. also Jones 1971b: 161–83 for an inscribed letter of Marcus Aurelius to Athens.
[60] For a list of extant imperial letters to the urban centres in Roman Egypt see Hoogendijk and van Minnen 1987: 68–9.
[61] *P.Oxy.* XXIV 2725. See p. 60.
[62] *P.Oxy.* XXV 2435 recto; *SB* XVI 12255; *SB* VI, 9213, 9528. On these texts see pp. 60–8.
[63] *CPJ* II 153 ll. 25–7.

As the letter to Adrastus and Sparticus shows, the minutes of important events in Alexandria, whether official or unofficial, were accessible to those in the *chora*.

As I noted above, people who were familiar with the form of trial minutes could very easily make their own. As I observed in chapter 2, ambassadors did record their meetings with emperors in their own writings. Philo wrote an account of the meeting of his embassy with Gaius recording the direct speech of the participants, and presumably based this on his personal recollection or written notes of the meeting. The Alexandrian Greek ambassadors Apion and Chaeremon may also have recorded their respective meetings with emperors in a similar way in their histories. The theory that the *Acta Alexandrinorum* were derived from accounts made by ambassadors could explain why the literature has the form of trial minutes, but records information in such a way that makes an official source unlikely.

Some examples of the *Acta Alexandrinorum* literature contain the type of information which can be found in official minutes. Some report the date of the hearing. *P.Oxy.* XXV 2435 verso l. 2 has a very specific date:

> Year 42 of Caesar, month [-], day [-], the ninth hour.

CPJ II 156a i.19–20 is dated 'year [one(?)] of Claudius Caesar Augustus, 5 Pachon'. A date appears to have been given in *P.Oxy.* XX 2264 i.2, 'the [-] year of Nero'. Those present at the hearing are often listed. *P.Oxy.* XXV 2435 verso ll. 6–12 lists some members of Augustus' *consilium* present at the hearing. *CPJ* II 156a ii.5–8 (= *CPJ* II 156b i.1–4) tells us that twenty senators, sixteen men of consular rank, and the women of the court attended Isidorus' trial. *P.Oxy.* XLII 3021 notes that the emperor's assessors are present (i.3), and lists the names of the Alexandrian ambassadors (i.5–6). *CPJ* II 157 col. i lists the Alexandrian Greek and Jewish ambassadors. The location is sometimes recorded. The events of *P.Oxy.* XXV 2435 verso took place in the Roman library in the Temple of Apollo (ll. 3–4). *CPJ* II 156a ii.4–5 (= *CPJ* II 156b i.1) tells us that Isidorus' trial took place in the '[-]lian gardens'. *CPJ* II 156a ii.2–4 describes the participants:

> The case of Isidorus, gymnasiarch of Alexandria, against King Agrippa . . .

Documents are read out in several of the trial scenes.[64]

Nonetheless, the *Acta Alexandrinorum* usually record dates in their Greek form, rather than using the Roman consular dating. The *SC de Cn. Pisone* shows that when listing those persons present, in this case at the writing of

[64] E.g. *P.Oxy.* III 471; *SB* VI 9213.

the *senatus consultum*, official Roman records would list the names of each man's father and tribe in addition to his *praenomen*, *nomen* and *cognomen*. This information is not only omitted in those lists of persons present in the *Acta Alexandrinorum* literature but the Roman names are frequently garbled as well (e.g. Organius, Aviolaus, Tarquinius).[65] Those present would be listed in order of status in Roman records. Yet in *CPJ* II 156a those of consular rank are mentioned after the other senators. While these could perhaps be explained as problems of abbreviation and translation, they are errors that would understandably be made in the minutes taken by Greek ambassadors.

Minutes taken by Alexandrian ambassadors may have been archived in Alexandria, where they would have been accessible. Comparative evidence from other cities shows that documents were archived and could be retrieved by a system of file references. An inscription from Caere refers to the 'daily record book (*commentarium*) of the municipality of Caere', and cites a section 'from page 27, chapter 6'.[66] An inscription from Sardinia cites a ruling that was written 'on the fifth tablet, in chapters 8, 9 and 10'.[67] Two pieces of *Acta* related literature, which report the proceedings of Alexandrian embassies in Rome, are headed by numbers, which may be file references. *P.Oxy.* XXV 2435 verso begins [. . . . . .]κ[.]λ π. This is taken as '[roll no. *x*] column 80 (κ[ο]λ(ήματος) π)'. The second column of the extant fragment of *CPJ* II 150 is headed by the letters μ κβ. These need not be file references, however, as the letter δ written at the foot of the fourth column of *P.Giss.Lit.* 4.7 may instead be the number of the column rather than a file reference.[68]

Wilcken used the numerous Latinisms in the *Acta Alexandrinorum* as evidence for an official Roman source. However, trials in Rome would have been conducted in the native language of the emperors, Latin. Augustus, for example, when giving a speech in Greek, would always write it in Latin and have it translated into Greek.[69] *P.Oxy.* LI 3614 reports that Severus 'delivered a judgement in his own tongue, after deliberating with friends'. A Greek rescript from Antoninus to an Egyptian begins with the phrase 'as faithful a translation from Latin as possible'.[70] It is not implausible that some emperors would allow the famous Greek orators of the day to speak in Greek. Tiberius, for example, was fluent in Greek.[71] Turner has argued that the speech of an Alexandrian ambassador in *CPJ* II 150 is actually a Greek translation from a Latin original.[72] The Latinisms in the stories need not, however, imply the use of Roman records, as the bilingual

[65] See pp. 24, 72. [66] *CIL* XI 3614. [67] Smallwood 1967: no. 392. [68] On this text see pp. 34–6.
[69] Suet. *Aug.* 89.1. [70] *P.Harr.* I 67. [71] Suet. *Tib.* 71. [72] Turner 1955a: 119–20; 1955b: 304–5.

Greek ambassadors could presumably take minutes in Latin as well as Greek.

I find it likely that records of Alexandria's dealings with emperors, such as the ambassadors' reports of their hearings with emperors and imperial letters, were archived in the city, where they were accessible. I think that the writers of the *Acta Alexandrinorum* literature used the city archives as a source. Nonetheless, the writers did not simply produce verbatim copies of the city's records. The notion of deliberately altering and falsifying such records was by no means an alien concept. Philo accuses Lampon of doing this:

> [Lampon] stood beside the governors while they were giving judgement, and took down the minutes of cases . . . He would then expunge some of the evidence or deliberately pass it over and sometimes insert statements that had not been made, sometimes, too, tamper with the documents by remodelling them and rearranging them and turning them upside down.[73]

The Roman authorities attached stern punishments for tampering with documents. Nonetheless, the fact that it was necessary to legislate against this practice shows that the forging and changing of documents did happen. Between AD 43 and 48 a decree was issued on the altering of documents which states that a public slave has entered false documents, which have 'interpolations and erasures' into the city archive.[74] Other ancient writers who can be shown to have used documentary sources did not simply copy them out. Tacitus 'cites' a speech of Claudius delivered in AD 48. A record of the same speech has been found inscribed at Lyons.[75] The inscribed version is considered to be a faithful record of the speech taken from the *acta senatus*, which Tacitus must have seen, as he cites some phrases verbatim. However, while Tacitus' version presents Claudius' main arguments, it is greatly reworked, with the contents of the speech reordered and condensed, and Claudius' ramblings and diversions are omitted.[76] Tacitus had also seen the *SC de Cn. Pisone*, but again does not simply reproduce the document verbatim in his writings.[77] Josephus too appears to excerpt and modify from documents concerning the status of the Jews in the ancient world.[78] The writers of the *Acta Alexandrinorum* proper would have found the outline of the proceedings of their embassies in Rome archived in their city records, and undoubtedly breathed fresh life into them, as other ancient writers did. The extent to which the writers rehydrated the accounts that they found is shown both in the numerous contradictions in the stories and in their narrative elements.

[73] Philo *Flacc*. 131. [74] Sherk 1988: no. 48. [75] Tac. *Ann*. 2.23–4; Smallwood 1967: no. 369.
[76] See Huzar 1984: 627–32. [77] Griffin 1997: 258. [78] See pp. 26–8 and 212–20.

The recording of minutes was very standardised during the Principate, with provincial magistrates, the senatorial court and the Alexandrians themselves all following imperial practice. This would suggest, as I have argued, that the most likely source for the *Acta Alexandrinorum* proper are the minutes of hearings taken by the Alexandrian ambassadors themselves or the *acta senatus*, but this record could only apply when emperors received embassies, or conducted trials, in the Senate. Such contemporary records are likely to be the basis of the *Acta Alexandrinorum* literature. Nonetheless, the writers need not have adhered very closely to the records, particularly in the case of the core group of *Acta Alexandrinorum* proper, which may have only very tentative links with the contemporary records from which they originally derive.

THE AUTHORSHIP AND READERSHIP OF THE *ACTA ALEXANDRINORUM*

The *Acta Alexandrinorum* literature had a broad appeal in Roman Egypt. Copies have been found both in cities, such as Oxyrhynchus, Hermopolis Magna and Panopolis, and also in villages, such as Karanis and other settlements in the Fayum. Most of the extant stories come from Oxyrhynchus and the villages of the Fayum, but this is to be expected as these sites have yielded the most papyri. Such an impressive geographical spread suggests that the literature was known and read throughout Roman Egypt.

Nonetheless, it has been the general consensus that the *Acta Alexandrinorum* literature was written by Alexandrians exclusively for Alexandrians. Musurillo developed the theory that it originated in the Alexandrian clubs and gymnasia and was secretly passed around the Alexandrian gymnasial class 'for private recitation'. According to this theory, copies of the texts found in the *chora* belonged to Alexandrians who owned land and lived there.[79] After all, of what possible interest could this literature be to Egyptians, especially when the Alexandrian ambassadors show hostility towards them?[80]

The stories presumably did originate in Alexandria. Many Alexandrians, including men who acted as ambassadors, wrote works about the city and Greek and Roman history in general.[81] However, although the stories may have thrived in Alexandria itself, the readership of this literature

[79] Musurillo 1954: 273–4.

[80] Isidorus equates Jews and Egyptians in *CPJ* II 156c ii.8–10.

[81] Cf. chapter 2 on the literature written by first-century AD Alexandrians, pp. 32–3. Sarapion wrote a work entitled *On the Alexandrian boule* (Suda s.v. Sarapion, Aelius), Callinicus of Petra presented a history of Alexandria to Queen Zenobia (Suda s.v. Callinicus, Gaius); see also Cameron 1967: 382–4; Stoneman 1992: 131.

encompassed a wider social spectrum than has previously been thought. Although the exact provenance of many of the texts is unknown, we can definitely identify an owner of one *Acta Alexandrinorum* story.

Acta XXII was among over 200 papyri fragments recovered from the house labelled B17 by excavators at Karanis, a Fayum village of several thousand inhabitants.[82] B17 was one of the largest and grandest residences in Karanis. Other texts retrieved from the same site reveal that the house, and consequently *Acta* XXII, belonged to a man named Socrates.[83] Several other papers belonging to Socrates were found in adjoining houses and in the street outside his house. These texts allow us to build up a detailed picture of the owner of *Acta* XXII. Socrates was born in the AD 90s into a family of metropolite status. He lived in Karanis where he served as a collector of taxes for about thirty-five years. He also occasionally acted as a census official and leased out public land.[84] The texts from his house all date from the period AD 135–71.

Socrates was one of the two sons of Sarapion (I) and Thatres. His brother Sarapion (II) was one of the *sitologoi* in charge of the granaries of Karanis.[85] Socrates had three children, Sarapion (III), Socrates (II) and an unnamed daughter, who married a Roman citizen named Valerianus.[86] Socrates' two sons took over his official roles as a tax collector and census official when he died.[87] Sempronia Gemella, a Roman citizen, was the mother of Socrates' three children. They apparently never married, as social legislation placed large financial penalties on the unions of Egyptians and Romans. Because such a union would infringe the legal status of their children, the children were registered *ex incerto patre*.[88] Gemella does not appear to have lived with Socrates and the pair may have separated.

Socrates was a leading member of the village elite and had important external connections. A neighbour who owned house B1 used Socrates to send messages to her son, a naval recruit in the Roman army in Italy.[89] It was to Socrates that a villager Artemis wrote when she needed help with a court case in the 'city' (i.e. Alexandria or Arsinoe). Socrates' daily entries into his tax rolls reveal that he would have made around 10,000 *drachmae* annually for himself, a huge amount of money and far more than a typical Roman soldier earned.[90]

[82] See App. 1, p. 180 on this text.
[83] On Socrates' archive see Strassi 1991: 245–62; van Minnen 1994: 237–49; 1998: 132–3.
[84] *P.Mich.* IX 564; *P.Mich.* VI 419; *P.Kar.Goodsp.* 78.
[85] *P.Mich.* VI 392–3.
[86] *P.Mich.* VIII 505, 506 are letters from Valerianus to his father-in-law.
[87] *BGU* III 819; *P.Aberd.* 35 (AD 202–3); *BGU* II 577 (AD 201–2); *BGU* I 97 (AD 202–3).
[88] *P.Mich.* III 169; *P. Mich.* XVII 759.
[89] *P.Mich.* VIII 490.
[90] *P.Mich.* VIII 490 (cf. perhaps XV 751); *P. Mich.* VIII 507; Schuman 1975: 23–66. After AD 83, Roman legionary pay was 300 *denarii* annually (equivalent to 1,200 *drachmae*).

Socrates was well educated and was fluent in Egyptian and Greek. In addition to *Acta* XXII, he owned several grammatical papyri and some of the works of Menander.[91] He had almost certainly read Callimachus' *Aitia*, fragments of which were found in a neighbouring house (B2).[92] A copy of Homer's *Iliad* was found in the nearby house (B7) which belonged to his 'wife' Gemella.[93] Socrates' tax rolls present us with a unique insight into both his personality and the level of his education.[94] In the tax rolls Socrates meticulously recorded the name of a landowner, followed, where it applied, by the name of the tenant in brackets. Socrates often recorded Greek translations of Egyptian names. Thus the Egyptian name Touamkiamoul, meaning 'camel-eater', was recorded in the register as Καμελοφάκος, and Petsesi ('the bitter one') as Πικρός.[95] A particularly revealing entry is Dios son of Panpin.[96] 'Panpin' was Egyptian for 'the one of mice' (i.e. a mouse-catcher). However, instead of employing one of the standard Greek translations of 'Panpin', such as Μυοθηρευτής, Μυοθηρατής, or Μυάγρα, Socrates chose to name him Ἀνδίκτης, a word attested only once in extant ancient Greek literature, in a verse of Callimachus cited by the orator Julius Pollux.[97] This is not a word that men of average education would ever have encountered, let alone used. Socrates could perhaps read Latin too, as Latin documents were found in his house.[98] Nonetheless, for all his high education and culture, Socrates was not an Alexandrian citizen, but an Egyptian, not only in law but clearly also in his cultural roots, however much he may have aspired to identify with the heroic Alexandrians about whom he read.

No other owners of examples of the *Acta Alexandrinorum* literature can be as readily identified. Nonetheless, men of a similar status to Socrates certainly owned papyrus texts of an essentially similar kind, also purporting to be documents concerning Alexandria. For instance, *CPJ* II 153, the papyrus version of the letter of Claudius to the Alexandrians, was copied personally by Nemesion son of Zoilos, another tax collector from a substantial Fayum village, Philadelphia, in the first century AD.[99] Like Socrates, Nemesion was one of the leading members of his village, and he was often asked to

[91] The grammatical papyri (*P.Mich.* inv. 4711a and 4693) are both unpublished. The Menander text is published in Gronewald 1986: 1–13.

[92] Published as Lloyd-Jones and Parsons 1983: 118–22 (no. 276).

[93] *P.Mich.* XVIII 759.

[94] See Youtie 1970: 545–51 for the following details.

[95] Touamkiamoul in *P.Mich.* IV 223.1821 and 224.2187 is Καμελοφάκοι in *P.Mich.* IV 225.2549. Petsesi in *P.Mich.* IV 223.2472 is Πικρός in *P.Mich.* IV 224.1846, 2652, 3175.

[96] Panpin: *P.Mich.* IV 224.2437, 3381, 3616, 5115, 5870.

[97] Callimachus, *Aitia* fr. 177 l. 33; Julius Pollux 10.156. It is restored in *PSI* XI 1218 fr. a l. 33.

[98] *P. Mich.* VII 442, 449.

[99] On Nemesion's archive see Hanson 1978: 60–74; 1984: 1107–18; 1988: 261–77; 1989: 429–40.

intervene into his friends' business affairs or used his external connections to further his own interests.[100] Another member of the village elite named Sarapion displayed anti-Jewish sentiments in a letter to a slave acting as his business agent in Alexandria dated to 4 August AD 41. Sarapion warns his slave: 'Like everyone else, you too beware of the Jews!'[101] Nemesion may have shared Sarapion's feelings as his copy of the letter, or the already doctored version which he copied, conveys a much harsher tone towards the Jews than Josephus' version.[102] Nemesion was reasonably well educated and literate in Greek, although he was often careless in his writing.[103] He was wealthy by village standards. The minimum property qualification for a taxation official was 600 *drachmae*.[104] Horion, another member of the village elite who occasionally served alongside Nemesion as a tax collector, had property worth roughly 4,500 *drachmae*, which perhaps gives an indication of Nemesion's wealth.[105] Nevertheless, Nemesion was not an Alexandrian citizen and, other than business links, had no firm connections to the city.

A reference to texts of this kind may be found in a private letter addressed to two brothers, Adrastus and Sparticus, who lived in the *chora*, written by their business agent in Alexandria. Adrastus and Sparticus could be Alexandrian citizens living in Oxyrhynchus (as their very Greek names could imply), or well-off, Hellenised metropolites. The agent promises to send the pair the 'minutes of the honours' of the entry of Titus Caesar into Alexandria on 25 April AD 71. The phrase 'minutes of the honours' suggests that they are being sent a written account, perhaps similar to surviving accounts on papyri of other imperial receptions in the city.[106]

P.Mil.Vogl. II 47, a copy of a prefectural edict concerning the disturbances in Alexandria during the reign of Trajan, was among roughly 750 literary and documentary papyri discovered in the famous *cantina* (cellar) of papyri at Tebtunis by Achille Vogliano in 1934.[107] The majority of the papers in the cellar concern the families of Kronion, Pakebkis, Diogenes, Turbo and the descendants of Patron, who ranged in status from moderately Hellenised priestly families to wealthy members of the elite 6,475 Hellenes.[108] Although

[100] E.g. *SB* XIV 12143. He petitioned the prefects Capito (*P.Mich.* X 582) and Balbillus (*SB* IV 7462). He employed Roman soldiers to aid him in his tax collection (*SB* XIV 11585; *P.Mich.* X 577; *SB* IV 7461).

[101] *CPJ* II 152 recto ll. 23–6. On the Philadelphian origin of the letter see Butin and Schwartz 1985: 127–9.

[102] See pp. 25–8. [103] Bell 1924: 2; *CPJ* II p. 37. [104] Lewis 1982: 42. [105] *P.Gen.* II 91 ll. 20–2.

[106] *P.Oxy.* XXXIV 2725; cf. p. 60 on *P.Oxy.* XXV 2435 recto, *SB* XVI 1225.

[107] Cazzaniga 1937: 159; Gallazzi 1990: 283–8. *P.Mil.Vogl.* I 18, the *Diegeseis* of the poems of Callimachus, was among the literary papyri.

[108] Gallazzi 1990: 283–8; Clarysse and Gallazzi 1993: 63–8; further references to the Kronion and Patron families in Rowlandson 1999: 152–4 and n. 34.

the text has not yet been assigned to any of these archives, it is reasonable to suppose that its owner came from a similar social milieu, and was not an Alexandrian.[109]

P.Giss.Lit. 4.4, a fragment from a play commemorating Trajan's deification and Hadrian's accession, belongs to the archive of Apollonius, *strategos* of the Apollinopolis–Heptakomias region in the early second century, who played a role in the suppression of the Jewish Revolt.[110] The verso of *P.Oxy.* LXVII 4592, a copy of an imperial letter to Alexandria, contains an address:

To Apollinarius, councillor and [ambassador].

Apollinarius may be a councillor from Antinoopolis who is attested in other sources.[111] *P.Bub.* I 4 xxix, a peculiar letter of Elagabalus, is part of a composite roll formed by pasting numerous documents together. Other documents in the roll are the correspondence between Septimius Arrianus the *dioiketes* and Aurelius Heraclides, the *strategos* of the Bubastite nome.

No other owners of this type of literature are traceable. The Oxyrhynchus papyri mainly come from rubbish dumps and consequently reveal nothing about their owners. *SB* VI 9213, the story of the trial of Heraclitus, was discovered in the cemetery of Hermopolis Magna, but no further details are available about which other texts, if any, were recovered with it.[112] *CPJ* II 156b, part of the story of the trial of Isidorus, was purchased at the site of the ancient city of Panopolis in 1926, but the identity of its owner is not known.[113]

A survey of the actual papyri demonstrates that the owners of the *Acta Alexandrinorum* literature belonged to a wide social spectrum, encompassing urban and rural Egyptians like Socrates of Karanis as well as Alexandrians who owned land and lived in the *chora*. Ancient 'books' were usually written in columns along the fibres (recto) of a papyrus, which would then be stored in a roll. The verso, where one would need to write across the fibres, was usually left blank, as it could be damaged during storage. During the first three centuries there was a growing trend towards the more practical and economical codex, where texts were written on both sides of the papyrus and the pages bound together. Among the higher echelons of society, the use of the verso was frowned upon and was seen as a sign of

[109] See Clarysse 1983: 43–61; Gallazzi 1990: 287; Clarysse and Gallazzi 1993: 63–8.
[110] See p. 118. [111] Bowman 1970: 20–6; *P.Oxy.* VI 933 and perhaps *W.Chr.* 27.
[112] See van Minnen and Worp 1993: 151–86 for an overview of the literary papyri from Hermopolis Magna.
[113] Bell 1932a: 5.

poverty and stinginess.[114] Several owners of the *Acta Alexandrinorum* literature chose to copy the stories onto the recto alone, leaving the verso blank, and it would be reasonable to suppose that these were men of a high social and economic status. Some of the texts are beautifully copied.[115] However, many of the stories were copied onto the verso of documents and may have belonged to men of a lower economical and social status. Several writers even chose to copy the stories on both sides of the papyrus.[116] Some of the texts were copied onto discarded documents, which were cut to size and pasted together to form a new roll.[117] However, there are many exceptions to these general observations. Despite his wealth, Socrates of Karanis frequently used the verso for literary works, such as his copy of Menander, and pasted together old papyri to form new rolls.[118]

The appeal of these stories to readers such as Socrates lay not merely in their entertainment value, but also in their promotion of Alexandria as the source of Hellenic ideals to which these 'upwardly mobile' Egyptians aspired. Through their Greek education and culture, which may have been acquired through a youthful sojourn in Alexandria, they perhaps entertained thoughts of following the paths of successful Egyptians such as Apion and Chaeremon, who had gained Alexandrian citizenship.

This Egyptian fascination with Alexandria is reflected in several private letters. In a letter of the second or third century AD, a youth from the *chora*, Theon, writes to his father, who was visiting Alexandria, sarcastically thanking the latter for not taking him. If his father does not take him next time he will not write or speak to him again, or say goodbye to him, or greet him, or take his hand. He tells his father that his mother has told someone in the town that 'it quite upsets him to be left behind', and threatens that he will not eat or drink again unless his father brings him back a lyre from Alexandria![119] A letter of the first century AD from a certain Neilus, an Egyptian studying in Alexandria, to his father in the *chora*, Theon, shows that Alexandria was the city to which aspiring Hellenes

[114] Martial *Ep*. 8.62; Juvenal 1.5–6; Lucian *Vit. auct*. 9. Cf. the apology for using the verso in *P.Gen*. I 52 ll. 3–4.

[115] Daris 1973: 237–8 – *P.Med*. inv. 275 has carefully formed letters, spaces between words, and punctuation has been added. Cf. also *CPJ* II 157 and *P.Schub*. 42.

[116] The same story is copied onto both sides of *P.Oxy*. XXII 2339, *BKT* IX 177 and *CPJ* II 158a. Separate stories are copied onto both sides of *P.Oxy*. XXV 2435. A literary work, Isocrates, *Ad Nicoclem* 12–13 (published as *P.Erl*. 5), was copied onto the verso of a trial scene in *P.Erl*. 16 (on which see p. 194).

[117] *CPJ* II 159. *CPJ* II 150 would appear to be a further example, despite suggestions that it is a case of *eschatokollion* (Bell 1949: 167–9; Bastianni 1987: 2 n. 12).

[118] For the Menander fragment see p. 114. For his pasting together of papyri see van Minnen 1994: 242 n. 67.

[119] *P. Oxy*. I 119.

travelled for their higher education. Neilus speaks of Alexandria with awe, and identifies himself with the Alexandrians, despite his own provincial origins. He 'despairs' that one teacher in Alexandria, Didymus, who 'used to be a mere provincial teacher (*choras kathegetes*), sees fit to compete with the rest'.[120] The Ammonius who tells his brothers that he is not an inhuman Egyptian may well be another example of an upwardly mobile Egyptian.[121] A fragment of what appears to be a literary encomium on Alexandria from the second century AD provides further testimony to the interest in Alexandria among readers in the *chora*.[122] This fascination with Alexandria in the *chora* had begun before the Principate, as an extract from a narrative history detailing the peaceful dispersion of a crowd disturbance in Alexandria, probably in 58 BC, on a first century BC papyrus from the Fayum attests.[123]

An opposite view of Alexandria can be found in papyri, although these are significantly fewer in number. In a letter to his parents in Oxyrhynchus, probably written from Alexandria in the third century AD, a son complains of unprecedented atrocities there, including cannibalism: an inversion of the literary trope which attributed cannibalism to Egyptians of the *chora*.[124]

Another factor in the popularity of the literature in the *chora* could be the Jewish Revolt of AD 115–17, which stirred up enormous anti-Jewish feelings among the urban and rural Egyptian population. The course of the Jewish Revolt in the *chora* is known primarily from a series of letters from the archive of Apollonius, a *strategos* from the district of Apollinopolis–Heptakomias.[125] The letters refer to the 'impious Jews', and Apollonius' mother considered the Jews to be cannibals and warned her son to avoid being roasted![126] Many Egyptians fought with the Romans against the Jews. In one battle near Hermopolis Magna the Egyptian force was 'beaten and many were killed'.[127] Almost a century later the Oxyrhynchites attempted to secure imperial favour by reminding Severus and Caracalla that they had aided the Romans in the war against the Jews. Their petition reveals that the third-century Oxyrhynchites still celebrated the day of the Jewish defeat as a festival.[128] Under these conditions, a literature with strong anti-Jewish overtones, such as the *Acta Alexandrinorum*, was bound to be popular.

The *Acta Alexandrinorum* were not exclusively read by the Alexandrian elite. This challenges the view that the stories were highly charged political

[120] *P.Oxy.* XVIII 2190 i.27–30. See Rea: 1993b: 75–88. [121] *P.Oxy.* XIV 1681.
[122] Hendriks, Parsons and Worp 1981: 71–83. [123] *BGU* VIII 1762.
[124] *P.Oxy.* XLII 3065. The editor's introduction offers several possible contexts, starting with Caracalla's 'massacre' of AD 215–16. On Egyptian cannibalism see Juvenal *Sat.* 15; Dio 72.4; cf. Achilles Tatius 3.15; Alston 1998: 129–53.
[125] These letters are among the documents collected in *CPJ* II 436–50.
[126] *CPJ* II 437. [127] *CPJ* II 438. [128] *CPJ* II 450.

pamphlets, circulated secretly among the Alexandrian clubs by dissident members of the gymnasial class. Socrates stored his *Acta Alexandrinorum* story alongside his copies of Menander and other literary works. The texts from Tebtunis and Oxyrhynchus were found among literary texts in their respective papyri dumps. This suggests that the *Acta Alexandrinorum* literature was never circulated in a clandestine manner. There is no sign that the stories were read by men who bitterly resented the Romans. Nemesion and Socrates, for example, had benefited enormously from the Roman conquest and held minor posts in their administration. Reading stories containing positive descriptions of Alexandria and its heroic citizens was a vehicle for socially ambitious Egyptians to lay a claim on a Greek identity which subsequently allowed them to gain status and prominence in their local communities. After all, even nowadays, it is typical that there is a wide social gap between heroes in popular literature and their readers.

DISSIDENT LITERATURE IN ROMAN EGYPT: MIMES

Mime literature was incredibly popular in the ancient world. Cicero noted its prevalence in Alexandria: 'It is the home of every sharp practice, every deceit; it is from its inhabitants that the writers of mimes draw all their plots.'[129] Mime literature could be used to express loyalty, as the play commemorating Hadrian's accession shows.[130] But mimes could also be used to express dissent. In Rome the leading mime actors used their popularity with the populace as protection and filled their performances with innuendoes and jokes directed against politicians and emperors.[131]

Mimes are frequently mentioned in Alexandria in connection with the Graeco-Jewish violence of the first and second centuries AD. They may have been a feature of the entertainment organised by Isidorus to mock Flaccus, in the early AD 30s.[132] Mime writers were employed to mock King Agrippa I in AD 38:

> They [the Alexandrian mob] spent their days at the gymnasium jeering at the king and bringing out a succession of jibes against him. In fact they took as their instructors the authors of mimes and jests.[133]

The parading of 'King Carabas' through the streets of Alexandria was essentially a public mime performance.[134] Philo claims that mimes and dancing

[129] Cic. *Rab. Post*. 35. Cf. Dio Chrys. *Or*. 32.86, 89. On the format of surviving Hellenistic and Roman mime see Hunter 2002: 196–201.
[130] *P.Giss.Lit*. 4.4. See p. 52.
[131] E.g. Suet. *Tib*. 45; *Calig*. 27; *Ner*. 39; *Galb*. 13; *Vesp*. 19; SHA *Marc*. 29.1–2.
[132] Philo *Flacc*. 138–40. [133] *Ibid*. 34. [134] *Ibid*. 36–9.

in the theatre accompanied the public torture and crucifixion of Jews during the riots of AD 38.[135] A similar parade occurred on the eve of the Jewish Revolt according to an *Acta Alexandrinorum* story, which claims that the prefect Lupus ordered 'the man from the stage and from the mime mocking the king' to be arrested.[136] The theatre, where mimes were performed, is often mentioned in the literature.[137]

Musurillo suggested that the dramatic exchanges between the Alexandrians and the emperors, the soliloquies delivered by some Alexandrians prior to execution and the obvious caricaturing may have been influenced by the mimes. But he considered the *Acta Alexandrinorum* to be significantly more serious in tone than surviving examples of (often frivolous) mime literature preserved on papyri.[138] However, there is no way of telling how representative the surviving mime literature actually is, and mime literature may have influenced the writers of the *Acta Alexandrinorum* stories. The calls of a crowd punctuate several stories, as the cries of a crowd in the theatre accompanied mime performances. Furthermore the asides between ambassadors, the contemporary humour and the continual entrances and exits of condemned ambassadors, which is a dramatic device to build up tension for the final scene, do suggest that some of the stories may even have been performed in the theatre and gymnasium.[139]

ORACULAR LITERATURE

Oracles had a long tradition of being used as resistance literature in the ancient world. Several oracles circulated in the east in the Hellenistic and Roman periods convey firm anti-Roman sentiments, assuring the Greeks that the Romans would one day suffer an unpleasant fate. Phlegon of Tralles, a Greek freedman of Hadrian, preserves some anti-Roman prophecies from the Hellenistic period in his collection of miracle stories.[140] He cites several prophecies predicting that the Greek gods would send powerful armies to destroy and enslave the Romans, warning the latter of the dire fate that awaited them unless they abandoned the conquest of the east.

The Romans were fully aware that oracles could be used as propaganda against them. Augustus ordered the destruction of more than 2,000 prophetic verses, including some Sibylline Oracles, an official collection

[135] *Ibid.* 85. [136] *CPJ* II 158a i.1–7.
[137] E.g. *P.Giss.Lit.* 4.7 unnumbered fr. l. 13; *P.Oxy.* III 471 l. 106; *Acta* XXII fr. III l. 2.
[138] Musurillo 1954: 248. [139] See pp. 41, 94.
[140] Gauger 1980: 225–61; Hansen 1996: no. 3. They were originally composed at various points between the war with Antiochus III and the successes of Mithridates in 89–88 BC.

stored in Rome since the time of Tarquinius Priscus, because they were politically subversive.[141] Dio preserves an anti-Roman oracle reputed to be Sibylline in origin, predicting the destruction of Rome, which Tiberius went to great lengths to prove to be a fake.[142] There was a ban on consulting oracles at the accession of Septimius Severus. A prefectural edict of AD 199 banned this 'dangerous inquisitiveness'. The penalty for ignoring this order was death.[143]

Twelve books of unofficial Sibylline Oracles, which contain anti-Roman sentiments in places, survive.[144] These prophecies, roughly half of which were probably written by Jews in Egypt and Alexandria, were composed between the mid-second century BC and the seventh century AD.[145] Books XI–XIV contain *ex eventu* 'prophecies', forming a regularly updated 'history' from the biblical flood until the Arab conquest. These prophecies depict certain emperors in negative terms and look forward to the coming of a saviour figure who will bring a new Golden Age. One verse predicts that Rome will repay three times the amount of tribute exacted from her subjects, that twenty times the number of Romans who have enslaved others will be enslaved, and that the mighty city of Rome will be as inconspicuous as a common street. It predicts that bad government, blame, envy, anger, folly, poverty, murder, strife, robberies, 'and every evil in those days' will end when Roman rule does.[146] Book V censures the Romans for their immoral behaviour, particularly adultery and homosexuality, their 'murderous heart' and 'impious spirit', and because they destroyed the Jewish Temple (V 160–1). The oracle predicts that

> mingled with burning fire [Rome will] inhabit the lawless nether region of Hades.

Book VIII also predicts the destruction of Rome:

> No longer will Syrian, Greek or foreigner, or any other nation,
> place their neck under your yoke of slavery.
> You will be utterly ravaged and destroyed for what you did.
> Groaning in panic, you will give until you have repaid all.

[141] Suet. *Aug.* 31.1; Dio 54.17.2. On these oracles see Buitenwerf 2003.
[142] Dio 57.18.3–5.
[143] *P.Coll.Youtie* I 30; see Rea 1977: 151–6.
[144] These oracles are numbered books I–VIII and XI–XIV; books IX–X repeat verses from VI–VIII.
[145] An Alexandrian Jewish origin is suggested by the glowing praise of the city (e.g. XI 232–5, XIII 43–9). Other sections reveal the contempt of the Alexandrian Jews for Greeks and Egyptians (e.g. V 487–9 predicts the doom of Serapis, the deity of the Alexandrian Greeks, and V 52–110 and 179–285 predict doom in Egypt and the destruction of the Pharaonic city of Memphis).
[146] Book III 350–80.

In some of these oracular verses one finds a far more bitter hatred for Rome than can be found in any of the *Acta Alexandrinorum*. The downfall and destruction of the Romans is eagerly anticipated, but set in a vague, distant future, and attributed to a shadowy saviour figure, or to God. Only one extant fragment of these oracles has been found among the papyri from Roman Egypt, which suggests that they were not as widely read there as other types of oracular literature.[147]

More directly comparable to the *Acta Alexandrinorum* are some oracular texts which stand in a long literary tradition of Egyptian nationalistic propaganda and which were more widely read in Roman Egypt.[148] Three slightly different versions of the *Oracle of the Potter* survive on papyri of the second and third centuries AD.[149] A recent analysis of the Greek language of these texts has suggested that they are written by native Egyptian speakers, but also influenced by Greek administrative vocabulary.[150] The oracle is attributed to a potter (a human incarnation of the Egyptian creator god Chnum), during the reign of Amenhotep, a Pharaoh of the Eighteenth dynasty (1550–1300 BC). Taken before the king, the potter fell into a deep trance and delivered a prophecy concerning the bleak future of Egypt. The king ordered his scribes to write down 'all that would befall Egypt in a sacred book'.

The oracle expresses bitter hostility towards the Alexandrian Greeks and the city of Alexandria. It predicts the ruin of Egypt under the rule of 'the Typhonians', the followers of Seth, who are termed 'the girdle-wearers', perhaps referring to the Greek dress worn in the army or police.[151] The Typhonians come from the 'city by the sea', which is currently 'being founded', reflecting the resentment in early Ptolemaic Egypt at the eclipse of the old Pharaonic capital, Memphis, by Alexander's new city on the Mediterranean coast. The oracle predicts a bleak, anarchic future for Egypt under the rule of the Typhonians/Alexandrians and looks forward to a time when 'the city of the girdle-wearers will be abandoned' and become 'a fisherman's drying place'. A saviour king will come and end the rule of the Greeks.

These versions of the oracle represent a fluid tradition which was regularly modified to reflect current concerns. Several further fragments of oracular

[147] *P.Oslo* II 14 (second century AD).

[148] See e.g. the *Oracle of the Lamb to Bocchoris* (*P.Rain.Cent.* 165–6) and the *Demotic Chronicle* (see Johnson 1984: 107–24); see more generally Tait 1996: 175–87; Depauw 1997: 97–9.

[149] *P.Rain.* inv. 19813 and *P.Oxy.* XXII 2332 (both third century AD). *P.Graf.* inv. 29787 (second century AD) contains the introductory narrative to the oracle. These are published (with plates) in Koenen 1968a: 178–209; see also Koenen 1970c: 249–54; 1984: 9–13.

[150] Koenen 2002: 181–2.

[151] Clarysse 1991: 177–8.

literature use extremely similar language and terms to the *Oracle of the Potter*, and appear to be updated versions of it composed in the Roman period.[152] The most substantial of these predicts that the old Egyptian temples will become exercise grounds for the cavalry, and urges the Egyptians not to allow their city to become deserted:

> The temples [will belong] to the horses [because of the] factions of the troops. Attack the Jews! Do not allow your city to become abandoned! Your largest temple will be a sandy exercise court for horses! They [the Jews] will commit injustice. Not prophets, but law-breakers and those who, because of the wrath of Isis, have previously been driven out of Egypt, will settle in Heliopolis.[153]

The gloomy prophecy continues to hope for the destruction of Alexandria:

> In the time [of the Typhonians] and Belt-Bearers [Egypt will be] suffering [ills through the terrible deeds committed] against [her. The city will be a] drying place for fishermen![154]

The reference to a βασ[ιλεύς(?)] in *PSI* VIII 982 l. 13 suggests that these versions of the oracle also look towards the coming of a saviour king. It is the Jews who are now depicted as the main enemy of Egypt in the extant sections, perhaps even to be identified with the Typhonians. If the Jewish offences are to be taken as literal, rather than metaphorical, these sections may reflect the Jewish Revolt of AD 115/6–17.[155] Alternatively the Typhonians may even be identified as Romans. Although the hand is too early for the prophecy to refer specifically to Diocletian's military camp in the temple at Luxor, the troops are surely Roman, and they are criticised, perhaps, for allowing the Greeks to hold chariot races in a land previously dominated by temples honouring the Egyptian gods.

Several other oracles from Roman Egypt show a similar discontent with the ruling regime. *P.Stanford* inv. G93bv and *P.Oxy.* XXXI 2554 are both *ex eventu* prophecies, telling 'history' in the form of a prophecy. Whereas the 'king' in the Sibylline Oracles and the *Oracle of the Potter* is a vague, shadowy figure, the king of these prophecies is the emperor. *P.Stanford* inv. G93bv (second century AD) 'predicts' the usurpation of Avidius Cassius. It foretells that 'there will be a revolt (*tarache*) in Egypt' (3), a death (5), the

[152] *PSI* VIII 982 = *CPJ* III 520 (third century AD); *P.Oxy.* [26] 3B.52.B (13) (a) (second century AD) – hereafter *P.Oxy.*, ined., on which see Koenen 2002: 139–87. *P.Oxy.* ined. consists of three fragments of twenty-one, eight, and fifteen lines. *PSI* VIII 982 corresponds almost exactly with *P.Oxy.* ined. fr. I 9–21. Other examples are *PSI* VII 760 (third–fourth century AD), a small fragment from Dublin transcribed in *P.Oxy.* XXII p. 92, and Coles 1970: no. 7 (pp. 254–6).

[153] *PSI* VIII 982 ll. 3–10; *P.Oxy.* ined. fr. I 12–19.

[154] *P.Oxy.* ined. fr. III 11–15.

[155] Frankfurter 1992: 203–20.

coming of a king (6) and dates the events to 'year 14 of [Marcus Aurelius Antonin(?)]us Augustus' (AD 173–4).[156] The mention of the moon being in Leo suggests that the very day of the revolt was given. *P.Oxy.* XXXI 2554 was copied onto the verso of a literary work in the third century AD.[157] The five fragments consist of annual predictions, each of which can be dated from the precise recording of how much the Nile rose each year. The prophecy uses bleak, anti-Roman terms reminiscent of the Sibylline Oracles and the *Oracle of the Potter* and predicts famine, war, sickness and ill fortune for the rich. One section 'foretells' the death of Septimius Severus in AD 211, a prediction which would not have pleased the Roman authorities:

> The king will leave his throne and another will overpower him, that is the king will die in his own house . . . after this the king will be great and punish his adversaries . . .[158]

All the extant versions of oracular literature in Roman Egypt are written in Greek and they were presumably read by educated Hellenised Egyptians, men of a similar standing to those who were reading the *Acta Alexandrinorum* literature. The oracles typically betray the prejudices of their writers. The *Oracle of the Potter* and its updated versions exhibit similar prejudices to those found in the *Acta Alexandrinorum*, notably the dislike of the Romans and the antagonism towards the Jews. But, in their anti-Alexandrian and anti-Greek stance, the oracular texts represent a conscious rejection of the popular fascination with Alexandria and the embracing of its Greek cultural values, in favour of an Egyptian identity drawn from its Pharaonic heritage. Other oracles composed in the Roman period also contain anti-Roman sentiments. The calls for the destruction of Rome and the enslavement of the Romans in the oracular literature go far beyond any of the quips and jibes directed towards Roman emperors by the Alexandrian Greeks. The Romans recognised that oracular literature was a manifestation of dissent and, as I noted above, periodically suppressed it.

LINKS WITH THE WIDER MEDITERRANEAN WORLD: THE FOREIGN CHARACTERS IN THE *ACTA ALEXANDRINORUM*

Nobles from other Greek cities such as Antioch, Athens, Ephesus and Tyre appear frequently in the *Acta Alexandrinorum* literature as prominent members of Alexandrian embassies. While it was a great honour to act as

[156] On this text see Shelton 1976: 209–13.
[157] *P.Oxy.* XXXI 2546, a fragment of Manetho's *Apotelesmatica*.
[158] *P.Oxy.* XXXI 2554 fr. 1 ii.7–9, 13–4; *P.Oxy.* XXXI pp. 81–3.

an ambassador for one's own fatherland, nobles often offered their services to other cities in return for pay, or other honours, such as the citizenship of the city.[159]

Tiberius Claudius Balbillus was greatly honoured in Ephesus, the first city of Asia Minor in the Roman period. The two honorific inscriptions erected there for him could simply reflect that he had held a procuratorial position in Asia, as he in fact had, or had acted as an ambassador on behalf of Ephesus.[160] However, the fact that Vespasian allowed the Ephesians to found annual games in Balbillus' honour called the Balbillea suggests that he was actually a native Ephesian.[161] Balbillus inherited the Roman citizenship from his father, Tiberius' astrologer Thrasyllus. He acted as an Alexandrian ambassador in AD 41, won accolades for a period of military service in Britain, enjoyed a career in the imperial service and remained an influential imperial adviser under the Flavians. He played a prominent role in the *Acta Alexandrinorum* stories set during Claudius' reign.[162] Balbillus may have been awarded the Alexandrian citizenship for his services to the city and could be an early example of a man who held the citizenship of several Greek cities, a common second-century AD phenomenon. He had links with other cities too. The Athenians set up a statue to Balbillus, in an inscription on which he is called 'procurator' (perhaps referring to his office as *ab epistulis*), presumably in return for Balbillus benefiting Athens in an official capacity.[163] Balbillus' descendants married into other prominent families in Greek cities. By the second century Balbillus' dynasty had strong family links with Sparta, Athens and Corinth.[164]

Paulus of Tyre acted as an ambassador for Alexandria, and features as prominently in several *Acta Alexandrinorum* stories set in the early second century AD as Balbillus had in those set in the time of Claudius. Tyre was a major city in Syria and later became the capital of Syria Phoenice. An Alexandrian, Tiberius Julius Alexander, was honoured as a patron of Tyre in an inscription there.[165] *CPJ* II 157 states that Paulus offered his services as advocate to the Alexandrians, but the extant version of the story focuses on another ambassador, Hermaiscus.[166] Paulus is referred to twice in *P.Oxy.* XVIII 2177, and Paulus himself or other Tyrians may have been present at this hearing.[167] The supplement Tyr[ians] (i.12) suggests that Tyrians

[159] Cf. Joseph. *Ap.* 2.29 – the Egyptian Apion was awarded Alexandrian citizenship for his services to the city.
[160] Smallwood 1967: no. 261a–b.
[161] Dio 66.9.2; see Brunet 1997: 137–8.
[162] See p. 20, and pp. 37–8, 39–45.
[163] *IDelos* VI 1861; Geagan 1997: 26.
[164] Spawforth 1978: 249–60.
[165] Barzanò 1988: 523–4; Rey-Coquais 1978: 71.
[166] *CPJ* II 157 i.9–11.
[167] *P.Oxy.* XVIII 2177 fr. 1 ii.36–7 and ii.46.

also appear in the story preserved in *P.Oxy.* XLII 3023.[168] Paulus plays a more prominent role in *CPJ* II 158a, where he narrowly escapes torture and execution. In this story there is little to distinguish him from the typical Alexandrian ambassador in this literature. He boldly tells the emperor that he has no fear of speaking the truth, his only concern being for the grave which he expects to have in Alexandria.[169] Paulus' statement, a clear show of commitment to the Alexandrians' cause, and his expectation to be buried in Alexandria suggest that he had been awarded the Alexandrian citizenship for his services and desired to be buried in his adopted fatherland. The evidence therefore suggests that Paulus of Tyre became a stock character in the *Acta Alexandrinorum* stories set in the early second century AD.

Like Alexandria, Athens had a grand past of its own and a long history of chequered relations with Rome. Athens had supported the losing side in three Roman civil wars in the first century BC and was punished violently by Sulla and penalised financially by Julius Caesar.[170] Augustus initially showed clemency towards the city.[171] However, the sources report periods of poor relations between Athens and Augustus, allegedly caused by the Athenians' support for Mark Antony.[172] In 22/1 BC Augustus confiscated Aegina and Eretria from Athens, and removed the city's privilege of selling Athenian citizenship. While Augustus was in Athens a statue of Athena allegedly turned west and spat blood. Augustus took this as a great insult and spent the remainder of the winter on Aegina.[173] Normal relations are attested for Augustus' following two visits to Athens.[174] Later sources insist that there was a serious uprising in the city near the end of Augustus' reign, and the appearance of a 'legate of Augustus and Tiberius' there at this time and the incorporation of Achaea into the imperial province of Moesia may confirm this tradition.[175]

An *Acta Alexandrinorum* story, *P.Oxy.* XVIII 2177, copied in the third century AD, prominently features an Athenian, Athamas, who acts on behalf of the Alexandrians. The other named ambassador, Athenodorus, may also have been an Athenian.[176] Athamas does not appear elsewhere in the stories, but Athenodorus also appears in *CPJ* II 157.[177] Although the name is

[168] *P.Oxy.* XLII p. 80. On this text see p. 128.
[169] *CPJ* II 158a vi.1–5. [170] See Hoff 1989: 1–8 on Caesar's punitive measures.
[171] E.g. Plut. *Ant.* 68.4. [172] Plut. *Reg. et imp. apophth.* 207.13.
[173] Dio 54.7.1–3. See Bowersock 1964a: 120–1. [174] Dio 54.9.7–10; 54.28.3.
[175] Euseb. *Chron.* Augustus year 52 (p. 170); Syncellus *CSHB* 19: p. 602; Oros. *Adv. pagan.* 6.22.1–2; Syme 1979b: 199–204; Bowersock 1964b: 207–10; Ehrenberg 1953: 938–44.
[176] *P.Oxy.* XX p. 96. Musurillo 1954: 196.
[177] *CPJ* II 157 i.9. An ancestor of the same name perhaps featured in a story set during the reign of Claudius – *BKT* IX 64 ii.21.

common, this Athenodorus may be the Athenian sophist of that name.[178] In this story the emperor, possibly Hadrian, hears an embassy whose purpose is to procure the return of some exiled nobles. If the exiles were Alexandrian, the Alexandrians may have asked the Athenians to petition Hadrian on their behalf, knowing that he held Athens in high regard.

The writer of the story greatly emphasises the fellowship, and common cause, of the Athenians and Alexandrians. The extant text begins with the emperor brusquely questioning the presence of Athenians on an Alexandrian embassy: 'You are ambassadors of a foreign city?' The emperor perhaps continues this line of questioning by asking later in the story: 'Do the Athenians have the same laws as the Alexandrians?'[179] Athamas' response to the former question stresses the camaraderie between the cities: 'We are not ambassadors of an alien city, but our own. Caesar, the cities are of the same stock!'[180] Again accentuating the Alexandrian–Athenian ties of kinship, Athenodorus claims that the cities share 'the strongest' of the laws, and that both have a good blend of harsh and lenient laws. The reference to lenient laws may have been intended to remind the emperor of clemency, which, from a reference to an execution later in the story, does not appear to have been shown. The emperor then summons his *consilium* and Athamas and asks him which city was responsible for the petition. The outcome of the story is unclear. From Athenodorus' statement 'Lord, I am here to answer my own charge', it would appear that he is the ambassador who was to be executed, although Athamas may well have shared his fate. Stories of Athenians confronting emperors were popular in Egypt, as these texts and others, such as the papyrus version of the story of Secundus the silent philosopher, show.[181]

OTHER CITIES, OTHER *ACTA*?

An Antiochene, Sopatrus, acted as advocate for the Jews in one of the *Acta Alexandrinorum* stories, *CPJ* II 157. Antiochenes also appear in a story which has many characteristic features of this literature but with one important difference: the Antiochenes, rather than the Alexandrians, incur the wrath of the emperor in *P.Oxy*. XLII 3023. There is no record of any conflict between Rome and Antioch until the revolt of Avidius Cassius, although there were serious tensions between the Greeks and Jews in Antioch in the Roman period. The underlying cause of this tension was the status of the

[178] Philostr. *VS* 2.14. [179] *P.Oxy*. XVIII 2177 i.4–5, 12–15.
[180] *P.Oxy*. XVIII 2177 i.5–8. [181] On this text see pp. 149–50.

Antiochene Jews, which in their city was similar to that of the Alexandrian Jews, despite Josephus' claims that they enjoyed the same civic privileges as the Antiochene Greeks.[182] There were serious outbreaks of Graeco-Jewish violence in Antioch in AD 39, 41–2, 66 and 70.[183]

P.Oxy. XLII 3023, a fragmentary text from Oxyrhynchus which was copied in the second century AD, tells the story (in the form of trial minutes) of an Antiochene embassy defending itself against the charges brought by a rival embassy before an unnamed emperor in Rome. The Antiochene spokesman, Claudius Atilianus, may have been a member of the Syrian provincial aristocracy and therefore may not be any of the Atiliani attested from other sources: the consul of AD 135, P. Calpurnius Atilianus Atticus Rufus; two second-century AD imperial procurators, C. Aurelius Atilianus and Julius Villius Atilianus; an asiarch Aurelius Aelius Attalianus.[184] The rival delegation may have been a Jewish embassy and the dramatic date linked to a period of Graeco-Jewish violence in Antioch. In the extant fragment the Antiochenes occupy the same dramatic role as the Alexandrians in the *Acta Alexandrinorum* stories and are faced by an apparently hostile emperor who sympathises with the opposing delegation:

> Caesar said: 'What do the Antiochenes say in answer to these claims?'
> Claudius Atilianus replied: 'Most divine of emperors, do you (?) trust this claim as if it were a true one . . .'[185]

The Graeco-Jewish violence at Antioch may have led to the Antiochenes developing a similar literature to the *Acta Alexandrinorum* and to the Alexandrian Greeks taking an interest in it.[186] Alexandria and Antioch would undoubtedly have kept themselves informed of developments in other cities regarding the status of the Jews. Philo states that the Greeks and Jews from other parts of the empire carefully monitored the events in Alexandria.[187] Both cities would be naturally extremely interested in records of imperial hearings involving disputes between Greeks and Jews. During Titus' visits to Antioch and Alexandria we perhaps even see a co-ordinated attempt by the two cities to deprive the Jews of their civic rights.[188] The similarities of this story with the *Acta Alexandrinorum* stories suggests that the Antiochenes were familiar with this type of literature and adapted the Alexandrian model to meet their own needs.

[182] Joseph. *BJ* 7.44. See also App. II, pp. 212–20.
[183] Malalas *CSHB* 31: pp. 244–5; Joseph. *BJ* 7.41–62; Downey 1961: 192–4, 203–5.
[184] *PIR*² C 250; *PIR*² A 1461; *PIR*¹ V 438; Magie 1950: 1604, and 449–50 on the post of asiarch.
[185] *P.Oxy.* XLII 3023 ii.4–11. [186] *P.Oxy.* XLII p. 78.
[187] Philo *Leg.* 371. [188] Joseph. *BJ* 7.100–11; *AJ* 12.121–4. See pp. 60, 215.

PSI XI 1222, a late second-century AD text of unknown provenance, records the speech of an advocate to an unidentified emperor on behalf of his fellow citizen, an 'eminent man' named Didymus. As the emperor already knows, Didymus has held 'two great magistracies' in his fatherland. Indeed the advocate continues: 'You appointed him magistrate, and you saw him twice when he came as an ambassador with both crowns.' Didymus is described as an orator and an elder, who had previously acted as an advocate in cases judged by the emperor and had enjoyed the freedom of speech that the emperor allowed to all those speaking before him.

Didymus' nationality and the details of his offence are not preserved. He may have been an Alexandrian citizen. Several prominent Alexandrian men of this name are known.[189] The reference to Didymus' 'crowns' could imply that he was a gymnasiarch, as crowns were part of the gymnasiarch's official robes of office. The vocabulary of the speech is similar to that found in the *Acta Alexandrinorum* literature. The status of his fatherland (*patris*) is emphasised, as is the high status of Didymus within his city. However, emperors were reluctant to interfere in the internal running of Alexandria and never publicly appointed civic magistrates.[190] The only imperial appointments made in Alexandria were connected to the Alexandrian Museum.[191] In contrast, imperial involvement in the appointment of magistrates in other cities in the Greek east is well attested. Hadrian, for example, frequently commended candidates for magistracies in other Greek cities, such as Athens and Ephesus.[192] The use of Attic Greek was a feature of the Second Sophistic, and the Atticising Greek used in the story (e.g. *perittos* for *perissos*) may indicate that Didymus and his lawyer came from another Greek city in the eastern empire.[193] As was the case with *P.Oxy.* XLII 3023, this text suggests that a literature similar to the *Acta Alexandrinorum* developed in other cities and was read in Roman Egypt.

Dio's anecdote about the statue of Athena coming alive and spitting towards Rome (see p. 126) is highly reminiscent of an episode in one of the *Acta Alexandrinorum* stories, the scene in *CPJ* II 157 where the Alexandrian god Serapis directly intervenes and creates panic in Rome. This suggests that the Athenians may have modelled this anecdote on the Serapis aretalogical literature, similar to those which feature in *CPJ* II 157 and some of the other stories.[194]

[189] An Alexandrian scholar in *P.Oxy.* XVIII 2190; a gymnasiarch in Kayser 1994: no. 39.
[190] Although, as noted on pp. 73–9, prefects did interfere in the appointment of magistracies, and emperors may also occasionally have done so.
[191] E.g. Philostr. *VS* 1.22; 1.25. Cf. Lewis 1981: 149–66.
[192] E.g. Smallwood 1966: no. 72.
[193] On the prevalence of Atticisms in the Second Sophistic see Anderson 1993: 87–94.
[194] See p. 95.

The *Acta Alexandrinorum* literature therefore has considerable links with the wider Mediterranean world. The literature prominently featured characters from other eastern centres, such as Ephesus, Tyre, Athens and Antioch. Other cities preserved the stories of confrontations between their prominent nobles and emperors in a form which is similar to that of the *Acta Alexandrinorum*. Further stories and anecdotes of Greeks facing Roman emperors in the imperial court are discussed in chapter 5. The fact that people in Roman Egypt were reading stories about Antiochenes and other foreigners, such as Didymus, confronting emperors would imply that the *Acta Alexandrinorum* were read outside Egypt and both influenced, and were influenced by, the development of similar stories in other centres. Antioch developed its own literature, which portrayed the reception of its ambassadors in the imperial court in a literary form similar to the *Acta Alexandrinorum*. This would imply that the *Acta Alexandrinorum* are not as unique as has been previously supposed, but are part of a much wider literary phenomenon.[195]

ALEXANDRIA UNDER THE SEVERANS

Most of the surviving *Acta Alexandrinorum* stories were copied in the Severan period (*c.* AD 200–40), but no known example post-dates this. Although most surviving papyri date from the Severan period, it is odd that stories about events which occurred two centuries earlier were being rewritten and updated at this time. The popularity of this type of literature in the Severan period once prompted the theory that the stories were composed by a single author in the third century, possibly in response to Caracalla's infamous visit to Alexandria in AD 215–16, during which he allegedly conducted a massacre of the populace.[196] This theory of single authorship is no longer accepted, as further examples dating from the first and second centuries AD have now been found. However, the reasons for the apparent popularity of the literature in the Severan period, and its consequent disappearance, warrant closer investigation. I will examine here whether the popularity and decline of the literature in this period can be ascribed to a single historical event or lie instead in other developments in the third century AD.

[195] On which see chapter 5, pp. 141–64.

[196] Von Premerstein 1923: 73; Bell 1950: 19–42 rejected the theory of a single author but suggested that hostility to Caracalla may have increased the popularity of the literature and led to new collections and editions of them at this time.

The history of Severan Alexandria is difficult to reconstruct due to the nature of the sources. The mainstream literary sources for the period discuss the visits of Severus and Caracalla to Alexandria and Egypt in AD 199–200 and that of Caracalla in AD 215–16. Unfortunately, while the contemporary writers Dio and Herodian, and the authors of the fourth-century biographies, the *Historia Augusta*, all had a certain amount of respect for Severus, they portray Caracalla as a stereotypical, mad tyrant.[197] In addition to this Dio's original account of Caracalla's visit to Alexandria is only preserved in three epitomes by Xiphilinus, Petrus Patricus and the *Exc. Val.*, whose summaries are not always reliable.[198] Several Byzantine writers, Georgius Syncellus, John Malalas and the authors of the Easter Chronicle and the Suda, also refer to the visits, evidently drawing upon earlier traditions. The literary accounts of Severus' visit can be combined to produce a straightforward and coherent narrative history, but for Caracalla's visit they are conflicting and contradictory. This does not simply result from the deliberate bias of the writers. The 'massacre' seems to have generated numerous conflicting and contradictory local Alexandrian traditions, in much the same way as the embassies to Gaius and Claudius had two centuries earlier. These traditions apparently provide the basis for the literary accounts and for several 'documents', such as imperial edicts and the story of the trial of Heraclitus. Several documentary papyri provide additional information; the extant *apokrimata* and *responsa* of Severus and Caracalla enable us to determine some of their judicial activities in Alexandria and Egypt and others supply dates.

After triumphing in the civil wars of AD 193–7, Septimius Severus visited Alexandria and Egypt in AD 199–200 with his sons Caracalla and Geta. The imperial party arrived in Egypt in November AD 199, and is last attested in Alexandria between 18 December AD 199 and 27 March–25 April AD 200.[199] Severus had returned to Antioch by 1 January AD 202.[200]

Severus punished cities which had supported Pescennius Niger in the civil wars. Immediately before the visit to Alexandria, Severus had penalised the city of Antioch by reducing its status within the province of Syria and lavishing favour upon a rival city, Laodicea.[201] Alexandria had also supported Niger and must have expected a similar punishment. Malalas

[197] On the careers and works of these writers see Millar 1964; De Blois 1998: 3391–443; Syme 1971.
[198] On the epitomes see Millar 1964: 1–4.
[199] Arrival: Lewis 1979: 253–4. Hannestad 1944: 194–222 suggests that he arrived earlier in the year. Last attestation: *P.Flor*. III 382; *P.Oxy*. XII 1405; *BGU* II 473.
[200] SHA *Sev*. 16.8; Barnes 1989b: 255–6. On Severus' visit to Thebes in Egypt see Dio 75.13.1–2; SHA *Sev*. 17.2–4; Théodoridès 1989: 267–82; Bowersock 1984: 21–32.
[201] For full details see Downey 1937: 141–56; 1961: 239–43; Ziegler 1978: 493–514.

and the Suda preserve a tradition which suggests that Alexandria's support for Niger was a cause of tension. Allegedly the Alexandrians inscribed 'this is the city of Niger' above the city gates.[202] The story is implausible. An edict suppressing prophetic literature prior to Severus' arrival shows that the prefect meticulously ensured that the visit ran smoothly.[203] The evidence suggests that, instead of punishing the Alexandrians as he had the Antiochenes, Severus courted the Alexandrian populace and passed measures which were beneficial to their city. He took part in the worship of Serapis and adorned Alexandria with new public buildings.[204] Severus also gave the Alexandrians permission to convene a council:

> He then gave the Alexandrians the privilege of a council, for they were still without any public council, just as they had been under their own kings, and were obliged to be content with the single governor appointed by Caesar.[205]

Documentary evidence shows that the council came into existence between 26 April–25 May AD 200 and 26 May–24 June AD 201.[206] The *apokrimata* show that Severus passed measures which were beneficial to Alexandria and Egypt, such as remitting 'the penalties imposed upon Alexandrians and Egyptians', presumably removing the financial penalties for taxes in arrears.[207] Other documents show Severus cancelling some of the old claims of the *fiscus*, legislating to prevent abuses by tax collectors and granting amnesty from delinquent taxes, in an attempt to persuade tax-evaders to return to their *idia*.[208]

However, several Severan initiatives were detrimental to the status of Alexandria. The convention of a council was overshadowed by the fact that *boulai* were also simultaneously granted to all the *metropoleis* of Egypt.[209] Although raising the status of other cities in the province had been part of the punitive policy which Severus had adopted towards Antioch, there were other sound reasons for their introduction.[210] Severus and Caracalla also passed a law concerning the position of the Jews in their cities at some point between AD 198 and 211. This law allowed Jews to hold municipal offices without imposing obligations that affected their *superstitio*.[211] It negated the main argument used by the Alexandrians in the past to show that the Jews could not possibly have been citizens of the *polis*, and may even implicitly

[202] Suda s.v. Severus emperor of Rome. Also Malalas *CSHB* 31: p. 293. [203] *P.Coll.Youtie* I 30.
[204] SHA *Sev.* 17.4; Malalas *CSHB* 31: p. 293; *Chron. Pasch. CSHB* 8: pp. 496–7.
[205] SHA *Sev.* 17.2–4; cf. Dio 51.17.3–4. [206] *SB* V 7817.
[207] *P.Col.* VI 123 l.5–7; Westermann and Schiller 1954: 52–3.
[208] *SB* IV 7366; *P.Mich.* IX 529; *SB* I 4284; *P.Oxy.* XLVII 3364; *P.Westminster Coll.* 3.
[209] Bowman 1971: 15–19. [210] *Ibid.*: 126–7. [211] *Digest* 50.2.3.3.

have allowed the Alexandrian Jews to become citizens. It may have raised the problem of the status of the Alexandrian Jews once again.

Caracalla visited Alexandria again late in AD 215 as sole emperor. The citizens of Alexandria are said by Herodian to have eagerly awaited his arrival and expected imperial benefactions during the visit.[212] Several oaths, dated 24–27 November AD 215, promising to send requisitions for the imperial visit to Pelusium, suggest that Caracalla did not arrive in Alexandria until December.[213] He is last attested in Alexandria in March AD 216.[214] He was back in Syria by 27 May AD 216.[215] Caracalla, an attested devotee of Serapis, probably stayed in Alexandria to celebrate the annual festival of Serapis on 25 April before he left for Syria. During the visit he apparently executed the prefect Heraclitus, who was suddenly removed from office early in AD 216, to be replaced by the former *iuridicus* Antinous as temporary prefect before Valerius Datus took up office in the spring of AD 216.[216] At some point Caracalla expelled Egyptians from the city of Alexandria. It is unclear whether he spent the whole of this short visit in Alexandria, or visited other places in Egypt. It is no longer thought that Caracalla planned to return to Alexandria after he had left.[217]

A Latin military document on a papyrus confirms that there was violence in Alexandria during Caracalla's visit, in which Roman soldiers had to intervene.[218] The document is a report by Heraclitus concerning the number of soldiers in a cohort and reveals how some soldiers had been killed or invalided out of the army and that over a quarter of the cohort were absent from Alexandria in the Egyptian *chora*.[219] The document is not dated although it belongs to Heraclitus' prefecture (AD 215–16). Comparative evidence reveals that such inventories of troops were made annually in time for the start of the Roman new year, which would date this document to December AD 215.[220]

Although this fixes the violence in Alexandria to December AD 215, the actual course of events is less clear because the biased literary sources attribute implausible motives for Caracalla's 'massacre' and are difficult to conflate into a single credible narrative. The events and chronology remain controversial among modern historians.[221] Xiphilinus' epitome of Dio and

[212] Herodian 4.8–9. [213] *P.Oxy*. LI 3602–5.
[214] *P.Oxy*. XLIII 3090. *SB* I 4275 also implies this. [215] *SEG* XVII 759; also *P.Oxy*. XLIII 3091.
[216] See Bureth 1988: 491 and Bastianini 1988: 512–13 on the dates of Datus' prefecture.
[217] See Schwartz 1959: 120–3; Whitehorne 1982: 132–5.
[218] *P.Brooklyn Museum* 24. See Thomas and Davies 1977: 50–61.
[219] Cf. *P.Ross.Georg*. III 1–2, private letters written by a doctor in the early third century AD which record heavy military casualties.
[220] Thomas and Davies 1977: 50–61.
[221] E.g. Lukasziewicz 1989: 491–6; 1990a: 341–7; Buraselis 1995: 166–88; 1998: 300; Favuzzi 1998: 251–6.

Herodian states that Caracalla entered Alexandria planning to massacre the populace because they had mocked him for reasons ranging from the murder of his brother to his alleged incestuous relationship with his mother to his obsession with Achilles and Alexander.[222]

There is no firm evidence of tension between Caracalla and the Alexandrians prior to his visit. Herodian suggests that Caracalla's brother Geta was popular in Alexandria due to rumours that he was planning to make Alexandria an imperial capital in an administrative division of the empire into eastern and western halves.[223] However, this story is anecdotal and Caracalla is unlikely to have tarnished his reputation significantly by his alleged murder of Geta or by enforcing the *damnatio memoriae* of his brother.[224] Equally there is no evidence that the execution of a procurator in Alexandria by an imperial freedman, Caracalla's dance teacher Theocritus, shortly before the visit damaged imperial relations with the city.[225] The story of Heraclitus' trial refers to a 'forbidden embassy' (ii.23 and 30–1?), but such a ban, if historical, could have been issued to prevent Caracalla wasting time on business which could be settled during the visit, rather than indicate hostility between Caracalla and the Alexandrians. Xiphilinus and Herodian actually admit that Caracalla had some affection for the city.[226]

A combination of the three main literary sources reveals three distinct massacres, which is improbable. All agree that there was a general massacre in the city, but disagree about what happened before this. Xiphilinus' epitome of Dio states that Caracalla ordered his reception committee to be executed before ordering a general massacre whereas Herodian and the *Historia Augusta* both agree that the massacre started as a result of Caracalla executing a number of the youths in Alexandria. Both the *Historia Augusta* and Herodian state that Caracalla was planning to enrol these youths into a military unit to assist with his campaigns against Parthia:

> [Caracalla] called the people together into the gymnasium and heaped abuse on them; he gave orders, moreover, that those who were physically qualified should be enrolled for military service. But those whom he enrolled he put to death, following the example of Ptolemy Euergetes, the eighth of those who bore the name Ptolemy. In addition to this he issued an order to his soldiers to slay their hosts and thus caused great slaughter at Alexandria.[227]

[222] Dio 78.22.1–2; Herodian 4.8–9. [223] Herodian 4.3.5–7.

[224] On the *damnatio* in Egypt see *BGU* XI 2056 and Mertens 1960: 541–52.

[225] On this incident see Dio 78.21.2–4; Lukaszewicz 1994a: 566–8; Titianus may be one of the Titiani who are known from Egypt in this period – see Lewis 1963: 257–61; Gilliam 1964: 293–9.

[226] Dio 78.22.1–2; Herodian 4.8–9.

[227] SHA *M. Ant.* 6.2–3; cf. the similar version in Herodian 4.8.6–9, in which Caracalla walked amongst the men speaking words of encouragement before ordering his soldiers to encircle and slaughter

It is very likely that Caracalla did recruit troops in Alexandria. He had been doing similar things elsewhere in the empire, for example creating a Macedonian phalanx in Thrace.[228] However, this recruitment may not be connected to the 'massacre'.

A close reading of the summaries of Dio reveals that the 'massacre' may actually have been the suppression of a serious riot. Xiphilinus states that Caracalla ordered his troops into action 'after first notifying all the inhabitants (of the city) to remain at home'.[229] This was a typical measure for controlling rioting.[230] The summaries also present different versions of a letter which Caracalla wrote to the Roman Senate immediately after the 'massacre', justifying his actions and describing the punishment for the Alexandrians.[231] Xiphilinus' version would suggest that Caracalla did indeed slaughter the population:

> He wrote to the Senate that it was of no interest how many of them or who had died, since all had deserved to suffer their fate.[232]

However, Patricus' epitome reveals that Caracalla did not order a large-scale massacre of the Alexandrian population but instead executed a number of Alexandrian tradesmen:

> After he had put to death the multitude of Alexandrian contractors (*ergolaboi*), Antoninus wrote to the Senate: 'It makes no difference at all how many of them were killed. For all deserved to suffer their fate.'[233]

Later traditions suggest that the 'massacre' was not altogether unjustified.[234]

The punitive measures taken by Caracalla in the aftermath of the 'massacre' also suggest that he had ordered the suppression of a riot involving tradesmen:

the youths. Herodian's account however is very similar to his description of Severus disarming the praetorians in AD 193 (2.13).

[228] Herodian 4.9.4–5. Cf. Suet. *Ner*. 19.2: Nero had created a new legion called a 'Phalanx of Alexander'. Herodian 4.8.1–3 reports that Caracalla had already undertaken a similar measure in Thrace, enrolling a 'Macedonian Phalanx'. Dio 78.7.1–2; 78.18.1 adds that this Thracian force of 16,000 men was called 'Alexander's Phalanx'.

[229] Dio 78.22.2–3.

[230] Cf. Joseph. *BJ* 2.487–93. Similar measures were employed in AD 66 to quell the Graeco-Jewish rioting.

[231] This letter may be alluded to in the story of the trial of Heraclitus; *SB* VI 9213 ii.15.

[232] Dio 78.22.3; cf. *Exc. Val*. 392 (p. 757) = Dio 78.23.2, in which Caracalla claimed in his letter that he was performing rites of purification in Alexandria, although he was really sacrificing the Alexandrians to himself.

[233] Petrus Patricus *Exc. Vat*. 149.

[234] Syncellus *CSHB* 19: p. 672: '[Caracalla] destroyed a great crowd on account of public disorder (*stasis*).' Cf. Euseb. *Hist. eccl*. 6.19.16: 'No small warfare broke out again in the city.'

Foreigners were all expelled, except for the merchants . . . Next he abolished the spectacles and 'public messes' (*syssitia*) of the Alexandrians and ordered that Alexandria be divided by a cross wall and occupied by guards at frequent intervals.[235]

The term *syssitia* can mean 'banquets' or 'public messes'. When this is viewed alongside Xiphilinus' statement that Caracalla took action against the Aristotelian philosophers, it is usually assumed that Caracalla abolished the coveted right of the Aristotelians to dine in the Museum.[236] However, the term *syssitia* can also mean 'clubs' or 'guilds', and it is more likely that Caracalla took action against Alexandrian trade-guilds.[237] Dio elsewhere uses the term in this sense as an equivalent of the Latin word *collegia*.[238] The Romans associated *collegia* with political strife, and it is well attested that such guilds were hotbeds of unrest in cities.[239] Trajan, for example, refused Pliny's request to convene a guild of firemen in Nicomedia:

It is to be remembered that this sort of society has greatly disturbed the peace of your province . . . Men who are banded together for a common end will all the same become a political association before long.[240]

City-guilds were often suppressed immediately following outbreaks of violence. The Senate dissolved all illegal associations in Pompeii and banned shows for ten years following a riot in the first century AD.[241] Marcus Aurelius punished Antioch for supporting Avidius Cassius by banning 'shows, meetings and every kind of public reunion'.[242] In the story of Heraclitus' trial references are made to trouble in the city involving tradesmen. The story claims that statues (presumably of Caracalla) were destroyed in workshops, and mentions workmen (*ergolaboi*), and perhaps guilds (σύσ[τ]α[σις(?)], ii.22).[243] Caracalla therefore presumably attempted to pacify Alexandria by abolishing the guilds of tradesmen which had been particularly active in the recent disorders.

P.Giss.Lit. 6.3 is a copy of an edict of Caracalla expelling Egyptians from Alexandria and may confirm Xiphilinus' statement that all foreigners were evicted from the city following the violence.[244] The edict expels Egyptians who have been stirring up trouble in the city, and Caracalla

[235] Dio 78.23.2–3.
[236] Dio 78.7.2–3; Favuzzi 1998: 251–6.
[237] Buraselis 1995: 166–88; 1998: 300.
[238] Cf. Dio 54.2.3 and Suet. *Aug.* 32.1 on Augustus' actions against guilds.
[239] E.g. Linen weavers at Tarsus (Dio Chrys. *Or.* 34.21.3; Jones 1978: 80); Bread sellers at Athens (Philostr. *VS* 1.23) and Ephesus (Abbott and Johnson 1926: no. 124); Silversmiths at Ephesus (*Acts* 19: 23–41). Cf. *P.Oxy.* XXII 2339 (pp. 83–6).
[240] Plin. *Ep.* 10.33–4.
[241] Tac. *Ann.* 14.17.
[242] SHA *Marc.* 25.8–9. See Downey 1961: 227–8.
[243] See p. 77.
[244] The document could however be a routine expulsion order, several examples of which have been preserved; e.g. Vibius Maximus in AD 104 (*Sel.Pap.* II 220), see p. 58; Sempronius Liberalis in

specifically rebukes one group of Egyptian tradesmen, the linen weavers, perhaps suggesting that they had been involved in some kind of rioting.[245] The edict was written while Caracalla was in Alexandria and may have been issued in March AD 216 in preparation for the annual festival of Serapis in April. However, the tone of the decree is far from punitive, unlike the measures announced by Xiphilinus, with Caracalla agreeing to expel uncultured Egyptian peasants from the city except those who provide beneficial services to the city.[246]

The confusion in the literary sources may stem from their use of local Alexandrian traditions. The *Historia Augusta* may have used such a source for the comparison made between Caracalla and the unpopular Ptolemaic king Ptolemy VIII Euergetes Physcon, which is more likely to derive from Alexandrian writers than the fourth-century AD biographers.[247] The origin of the comparison may be that Euergetes had also taken measures against trade associations in the city, and both had also allegedly executed a rival to the throne, Euergetes executing his own son Memphites.[248] In anger at this the Alexandrians had torn down statues of Ptolemy VIII; similar acts of vandalism on statues of Caracalla are referred to in the story of Heraclitus' trial.[249] Perhaps details of Caracalla's 'massacre' were embellished in Alexandria in order to produce a more exact comparison. Caracalla's massacre of the youth in the gymnasium seems too close to a massacre Ptolemy VIII had apparently carried out there in the 120s BC to be considered historical:

> He surrounded the gymnasium crowded with young people, killing all those that were inside, some with weapons, some with fire.[250]

It seems therefore that there was a serious outbreak of violence in Alexandria soon after Caracalla's arrival. As the tradesmen played a key role in the rioting, they were singled out for punishment in the aftermath of the riots

AD 154 (*BGU* II 372; cf. *P.Fay*. 24). Caracalla, as co-ruler with Severus, and as sole emperor, had already issued several such edicts (*P.Oxy*. XLVII 3364; Thomas 1975: 210–21; *SB* I 4284; *P.Westminster Coll*. 3; *P.Giss.Lit*. 6.2). This order may even have been issued in anticipation of the census of AD 216.

[245] *P.Giss.Lit*. 6.3 4–5, 12–13, on which see also pp. 57–8.

[246] Lukaszewicz 1990a: 341–7. See above pp. 57–8 on this text. An inscription (*SB* I 4275) dedicated to Caracalla by the Alexandrians and dated to 11 March AD 216, in which Caracalla is called *kosmokrater* and *philoserapis*, also suggests cordial relations at this time.

[247] Cf. Dio 66.8.2–9.2. The Alexandrians also compared Vespasian to Ptolemy X Kybiosactes in order to emphasise his meanness.

[248] *P.Tebt*. III 700. He passed measures on associations including gymnasia and *politeumata*, ordering the leaders to alienate certain properties or be executed. On Memphites see Diod. Sic. 34/5 14.

[249] Fraser 1972: 121 with nn. 237–8; *SB* VI 9213 i.6–8.

[250] Val. Max. 9.2.5; see also Athenaeus 4.184 (citing Menecles of Barca); Strabo 17.1.12; Polyb. 34.14. Cf. the *Historia Augusta*'s version of Caracalla's 'massacre' on p. 134.

and their trade-guilds were dissolved. The prefect Heraclitus was apparently executed for mishandling the suppression of the riot, but it is difficult to speculate on what happened beyond this. The literary accounts appear to be influenced by local Alexandrian traditions, which amended events to make Caracalla more analogous to the unpopular Ptolemy VIII and to make Caracalla's 'massacre' resemble events of the 120s BC more closely. Several of the 'documents' relating to the 'massacre', which display fictional elements, appear to have been similarly affected.[251] The probably historical story of the creation of an Alexandrian phalanx became confused with the story of the 'massacre' in these sensationalist Alexandrian traditions, which preferred to credit Caracalla with an unjust massacre of the city's population rather than the justified crushing of a riot.

The popularity of the *Acta Alexandrinorum* literature was at its height in the Severan period but waned soon after it. The history of Alexandria in this period is too unclear to ascribe this popularity to one single event, such as Caracalla's 'massacre'. Accounting for its decline is equally difficult. Musurillo argued that the *Acta Alexandrinorum* literature disappeared as a direct result of Rome making peace with Alexandria's civic pride by granting the city a *boule*. However, the volatile history of third-century AD Alexandria does not support this theory.

Perhaps one reason for the disappearance of the literature lies in the series of violent disturbances which plagued Alexandria throughout the third century AD. A letter from Oxyrhynchus, written in the third century AD, refers to a serious war in the city, reporting that 'now it's cannibalism, not war!'[252] The particular disturbance to which this letter refers is unknown. There were serious riots in Alexandria during Macrinus' reign (217–18), which forced the prefect Basilianus to flee from the city.[253] A *polemos* against the Christians accompanied Rome's millennium festival in AD 248.[254] Further anti-Christian violence in Alexandria followed Decius' edict of AD 249 instructing all the inhabitants of the empire to sacrifice to the gods of Rome and is attested also during Valerian's 'persecution' in the AD 250s.[255] Eusebius' citations of the letters of Dionysius bishop of Alexandria reveal that there was war, famine and a serious plague in

[251] See *P.Bon.* 15, an edict of Caracalla (p. 57); *SB* VI 9213 on the trial of Heraclitus (p. 77); the edict of Caracalla expelling Egyptians from Alexandria, *P.Giss.Lit.* 6.3 (pp. 57–8).

[252] *P.Oxy.* XLII 3065. [253] Dio 79.35.1–3.

[254] Euseb. *Hist. eccl.* 6.41.1–9; Sibylline Oracles 13.50–3, 74–8; Potter 1990: 240–1, 252–3; Oost 1961: 1–20.

[255] Euseb. *Hist. eccl.* 6.41.10–42.6, 44. On the edict see Knipfing 1923: 345–90; Rives 1999: 135–54; on Valerian's 'persecution' see Euseb. *Hist. eccl.* 7.10–11.

Alexandria in the early 260s.[256] Eusebius provides a tentative glimpse of this *stasis*, during which the Romans besieged the Bruchium district, the section of Alexandria housing many major buildings, including the seat of the Alexandrian *boule*. Eusebius' interest in the siege is the heroism of the Christian Anatolius, who managed to save large numbers of Christians and pagans by arranging safe passage to deserters from the district, but he states that the Alexandrian council refused to surrender to the Romans.[257] The cause of this *stasis* is not known, although it may have been connected to the revolt of Macrianus and Quietus (AD 260–1), which in turn may be connected to the alleged revolt of the prefect Aemilianus, who is attested in office between AD 258 and 261.[258] The literary sources allege that there were further revolts in the city during the reigns of Claudius II (AD 268–70) and Aurelian (AD 270–5), the first related to the Palmyrene invasion of Egypt.[259] Aurelian allegedly razed the walls of Alexandria, and the district of Bruchium, in quelling this revolt.[260] There were two further revolts under the tetrarchs. It is not clear if Alexandria was involved in the first of these, which saw an emperor (Galerius?) raze Busiris (or Boresis?) and Coptos to the ground and campaign in southern Egypt.[261] But Alexandria again rebelled against central Roman authority in AD 296–7, supporting the usurpation of Domitius Domitianus. Diocletian personally recaptured the city after a long siege.[262]

By the mid-third century AD the *Acta Alexandrinorum* literature was losing its relevance to Egyptians living in the *chora*. It presupposed a stable, orderly society in which there was an emperor in Rome who received Alexandrian embassies and judged cases concerning its citizens. Such a society was rarely in evidence in the third century when the rapid turnover of emperors and the almost constant fighting on most of the frontiers meant that emperors spent much less time in Rome than before. Popular contemporary literature may instead have followed the turbulence within Egypt itself. *P.Oxy*. XXVII 2466, a third-century account of an Arab invasion of Egypt led by a certain 'Webelis', may be an example of this.[263]

I believe that the reasons for the decline of the *Acta Alexandrinorum* literature lie more in the social, administrative and legal initiatives passed in the

[256] See Strobel 1993: 185–210. [257] Euseb. *Hist. eccl*. 7.32.7–12.
[258] Oost 1961: 1–20. The evidence for the revolt of Aemilianus is dubious – SHA *Gall*. 4.1–2, 5.6, 9.1; *Tyr. Trig*. 22.
[259] Zosimus 1.44; SHA *Claud*. 11.
[260] Amm. Marc. 22.16.15. [261] See Bowman 1984: 33–6; *P.Oxy*. 1 43.
[262] See Schwartz 1975 and Thomas 1976: 253–79 on this revolt.
[263] The editor states that the hand is too early for 'Webelis' to be the Palmyrene leader, Vaballathus.

Severan period. As I observed earlier (pp. 112–19), Egyptians were reading the literature as a means of laying claim to a Hellenic identity which they subsequently used to gain prominence within their communities. However, during the third century AD, Alexandria's status within Egypt was changing. The initiatives of the Severan period partially reflect this change, and also partially accelerated the process. Septimius Severus granted all the cities in Egypt the right to convene councils, greatly diminishing the importance of the institution of Alexandria's own council. In AD 212 Caracalla issued the so-called *Constitutio Antoniniana*, a decree granting Roman citizenship to all the inhabitants of the empire. His motivation for this, according to Dio, was primarily financial.[264] This unintentionally eroded one of the privileges of Alexandria, the exclusive right to obtain Roman citizenship, because it was no longer necessary for provincials to court the Alexandrian citizenship as a route to the Roman citizenship. Another privilege, the exemption from the poll tax, was also lost when this tax was phased out in the mid-third century.[265] Alexandria was now no longer 'the city' in Egypt, but the *prima inter pares*.

By the AD 250s, the literature was losing its *raison d'être* in Alexandria itself. The Greeks in Alexandria had a new enemy, the Christians. The Greeks persecuted the Christians in much the same way as they had the Jews in the first two centuries AD, and were even perhaps joined in this by the Jews of the city. The Christian–pagan quarrels in the city dominate the history of Byzantine Alexandria. The Byzantine period witnessed the amphitheatres and racetracks eclipse the gymnasia and theatres as focal points of Greek culture. This would have led to the decline of a literature which placed such prominence on these institutions especially if, as I have argued above (pp. 119–20), the stories were intended for public performance. The literature disappeared in Alexandria, I would estimate, in the second half of the third century AD. The growing popularity of the Christian Martyr Acts and other similar literary forms served to fill the void left by its disappearance.

[264] Dio 78.9.5. [265] Bowman and Rathbone 1992: 127.

CHAPTER 5

Between loyalty and dissent: The Acta Alexandrinorum *and contemporary literature*

CONTEMPORARY TRIAL LITERATURE

Tales of brave men resisting tyrants feature prominently in the literature of the Principate. In particular there are numerous accounts of men suffering punishments, ranging from torture and death to exile, at the hands of the emperor. Many of these stories contain the elements present in the *Acta Alexandrinorum* stories: the brave hero is taken before a tyrant; the trial; the threats of death; courageous resistance to the tyrant; torture; execution. I hope to shed light on the character of the *Acta Alexandrinorum* stories by comparing them with the trial scenes found in the contemporary literature of Rome and its empire, such as the accounts of the trial of Socrates, the narratives of Stoic opposition to Roman emperors, the tales of Greek philosophers confronting Roman rulers, Hellenistic and Rabbinical texts on Jewish figures who stood up to oppressors, the stories of Jesus' trial, and the acts of the Christian martyrs. These texts are recognised as dissident literature and have, as I will argue, numerous similarities with the *Acta Alexandrinorum* stories. I will also examine the links between the *Acta Alexandrinorum* literature and the biographies, treatises and novels of the Second Sophistic, and discuss the extent to which these connections set it apart from resistance or dissident literature of the Roman Empire.

The term 'martyr' refers to a person who dies an heroic death, preferring to die rather than comply with the demands of the authorities, usually represented by a tyrant figure. Martyrs often die violently, either facing execution or committing suicide, rather than give up their convictions and beliefs, and their deaths are usually for the benefit of others.[1] The actions of the martyrs form a model for the group who write idealised accounts about their deeds, which play an important role in the formation of the self-identity of the group. The martyrs are aware of the earlier traditions

[1] See S. Williams 1975: Seeley 1990; de Jonge 1988: 142–51.

about the men who have died 'noble deaths' and know that through their own deaths they become part of a chain of heroic events and a long series of heroes.[2] The stories of the martyrs emphasise their inner personal strength through their endurance in the face of oppression. Although the term 'martyr' is first attested in the mid-second century AD, in the Christian story of the martyrdom of Polycarp, the concept itself pre-dates this.[3] The notion of heroic self-sacrifice pervades Greek culture and appears in writings ranging from the Homeric epics, where it is epitomised by Achilles, to Aristotle's treatises, where he argues how a virtuous person is prepared to give up his own life for his friends and his family.[4]

CLASSICAL GREECE

The Athenian philosopher Socrates was tried and convicted by a democratic court in 399 BC. His calm acceptance of death and his refusal to make any concession which would betray his convictions or to be saved by his friends won him great admiration in antiquity. His trial and suicide led to his being idealised as a paradigm for opposition to tyranny and the archetype of a long line of brave philosophers who confronted tyrants without shrinking from their threats, saying what was needed frankly and being punished for it.[5] The story of his trial became the literary template for much subsequent trial literature. Several writers, such as Plato, Xenophon and Lysias, composed *apologiae* defending Socrates in the decades that followed.[6] Conversely Polycrates and other writers composed prosecution speeches attacking Socrates.[7] These writers, even the ones who may have been present at the original trial, did not simply transcribe the historical prosecution or defence speeches but embellished, adapted and amended them. The practice of composing fictional arraignments and *apologiae* became popular in fourth-century BC Athens. Two politicians, Theramenes and Alcibiades, became targets of such pamphlets.[8] The composition of declamations, often using Alcibiades

[2] As, for example, Appian is aware of the Alexandrians who have died before him (*CPJ* II 159b iv.3–7).
[3] Willem van Henten and Avermarie 2002: 2. [4] Aristot. *NE* 1169a.
[5] The stories of several such confrontations from the Hellenistic period are preserved in the form of anecdotes. E.g. Plut. *Alex*. 14.2; Diog. Laert. 5.4–5 (cf. Arr. *Anab*. 4.10–14); Diog. Laert. 3.18–19; see also *ibid*. 9.59, 9.26.
[6] Plato, *Apologia*; Xenophon, *Memorabilia*; Cic. *De or*. 1.231. See Oldfather 1938: 204.
[7] These works are referred to in Diog. Laert. 2.39–40; Isocrates *Bus*. 4; Ael. *Var. Hist*. 11.10. See also Chroust 1955: 1–77.
[8] A defence of Theramenes is preserved in *P.Mich*. inv. 5982, a second-century AD papyrus from Karanis; see Merkelbach and Youtie 1968: 161–9; Henrichs 1968a: 101–8. Breitenbach 1989: 121–35 argues that the author was Ephorus. A new fragment is discussed in Loftus 2000: 11–20. One line corresponds to a section from a surviving prosecution speech of Theramenes (Ps.-Lysias 12.69), on which see Andrewes 1970: 35–8. Ps.-Lysias 14–15 are vitriolic prosecution speeches of Alcibiades.

as a subject, continued to be an exercise in rhetorical schools throughout the Principate.[9]

However, most of the trial literature composed under the Principate does not take the form of long defence or prosecution speeches, but uses a terse question-and-answer format. This development, which allowed more interplay between the speakers, occurred in the Hellenistic period. An example is the story of the trial of the gymnosophists before Alexander, which is preserved in Plutarch and on two papyri.[10] In the story Alexander is cast in the role of tyrant and threatens to execute the first gymnosophist to answer his questions poorly.

ROME OF THE PRINCIPATE

The Romans had a martyr literature which began with Cato the Younger, who committed suicide in 46 BC rather than receive a pardon from Caesar. While his friends gathered for dinner, Cato removed himself to his room and read a copy of Plato's *Phaedo* before he retired to his chambers and thrust a sword into his side.[11] Cato's nephew, Marcus Junius Brutus, one of Caesar's assassins, also killed himself after the defeat at Philippi. The names of Cato and Brutus became associated with the 'glorious' Republican past and they came to embody Republican virtues. Their suicides inspired numerous political pamphlets. Following the model of the fourth-century BC Athenian trial literature, these pamphlets took the form of fictional defence and prosecution speeches. Several writers composed eulogistic apologies of Cato, which inevitably attacked Caesar. Caesar himself, his general Aulus Hirtius and Augustus wrote *Anticatones*, none of which have survived.[12]

The continued composition of *Catones* and eulogies of Brutus during the Principate was politically dangerous and was a favoured pretext for senatorial prosecutors seeking to remove their political enemies. In return for exposing alleged enemies of the regime, these men could expect imperial favour, promotion and financial rewards, which on one occasion amounted to 5 million *sestertii*.[13] In AD 25 Cremutius Cordus was tried in the Senate for

[9] E.g. *P.Stras*. inv. Gr. 2346 (fifth century AD) = Pack² 2497 published in Lewis 1936: 79–87; Stephens 1995: 215–24. See also p. 166.

[10] Plut. *Alex*. 64; Wilcken 1923: 150–83 = Manteuffel 1930: no. II (first century BC); *PSI* VII 743 (first century AD).

[11] Plut. *Cat. Min*. 68–70.

[12] On these works see Dyroff 1908: 587–604; Jones 1970: 188–96; Tscheidel 1981 collects all testimonies and citations of Caesar's *Anticato*. On Augustus' work see Suet. *Aug*. 85.1.

[13] Tac. *Ann*. 16.33.

writing a pamphlet praising Cato and Brutus as 'the last of the Romans'.[14] Cassius Longinus was punished for having a bust of Brutus' accomplice, Cassius, in his house bearing the inscription 'to the leader of the cause' (*duci partium*).[15] The composition of biographies of Cato was partly responsible for the fates of Thrasea Paetus (enforced suicide), Curatius Maternus (execution) and Munatius Rufus (exile).[16]

The most famous political martyrs in first-century AD Rome were Seneca, Thrasea Paetus, Barea Soranus, the Helvidii Prisci (elder and younger), Herennius Senecio and Arulenus Rusticus, most of whom suffered punishment during the reigns of Nero, Vespasian and Domitian. Although many of these men were Stoics, this philosophy did not encourage opposition or induce subversion or disobedience, and there was no clearly organised 'Stoic resistance' among the Roman elite.[17] Accusations of Stoicism, as well as Catonism, were a common pretext in the prosecution speeches of the *delatores*.[18]

Exitus literature, as Pliny designates it, told the stories of the deaths of these political martyrs. Pliny states that he was unable to attend a reading of one such work 'on the deaths of famous men (*exitus inlustrium virorum*)' by an equestrian official named Titinius Capito, who celebrated the lives of Brutus, Cassius, Cato and those executed by Nero in verse.[19] Another author of *exitus* literature, Gaius Fannius, died before completing 'a history of the various fates of those put to death or banished by Nero'.[20] When Tacitus refers to 'catalogues' of trials, he may be referring to *exitus* literature.[21] The composition of such lives and eulogies was extensive among the Roman nobility. Pliny himself and Herennius Senecio both composed lives of Helvidius the elder and Arulenus Rusticus composed a eulogy of Thrasea Paetus.[22]

The form, style and content of *exitus* literature can be deduced from writers who were familiar with the genre, such as Tacitus, Pliny and Epictetus, although no examples have been preserved. The evidence would suggest a eulogistic biography with a weighted and dramatic emphasis on the death scene and last words. Trial scenes, which are central to the *Acta Alexandrinorum* stories, played a minimal role because Romans tended to commit

[14] Suet. *Tib*. 61.3; Tac. *Ann*. 4.34; Dio 57.24.2. According to Sen. *Dial*. 6.22.4, the real reason was Sejanus' spite.
[15] Dio 62.27.1–2; Tac. *Ann*. 16.7. [16] Plut. *Cat. Min*. 25.1, 37.1–2; Val. Max. 4.3.2; Tac. *Dial*. 2.
[17] Brunt 1975: 7–39; Wistrand 1979: 93–101.
[18] E.g. Tac. *Ann*. 16.21. The personal enmity between Thrasea Paetus and his accuser Capito was the cause of his trial, although the pretexts of Catonism and Stoicism were employed.
[19] Plin. *Ep*. 8.12, 1.17.3–4. [20] *Ibid*. 5.5. [21] Tac. *Ann*. 6.7.
[22] Plin. *Ep*. 9.13; Dio 67.13.1–3; Tac. *Agr*. 2; Suet. *Dom*. 10.3.

suicide before their trial if they suspected that their defence would not prevail. The defendant therefore died an innocent man and could expect the emperor to show clemency to his family and to allow them to inherit his property.[23] Tacitus' accounts of the deaths of Seneca and Thrasea Paetus, which are explicitly influenced by the literary traditions surrounding the deaths of Socrates and Cato, are perhaps indicative of the dramatic death scenes from *exitus* literature. Seneca was dining with friends when a guard of Nero arrived informing him that he must die. Tacitus records his last words and attempts at suicide, which culminated in drinking hemlock, the poison used to execute Socrates.[24] When news arrived of his fate, Thrasea too was dining with distinguished company, and was debating the nature of the soul with the philosopher Demetrius. He withdrew to his chambers and cut his veins, defiantly uttering his last words: 'This is an offering to Jupiter the Liberator!'[25] Pliny, perhaps using a piece of *exitus* literature as his source, records the deaths of Caecina Paetus and Arria, who had joined Scribonianus' revolt; Arria stabbed herself and then handed the dagger to her husband claiming: 'It does not hurt, Paetus.'[26]

Trial scenes were included in *exitus* literature, where applicable. These were reported in a mixture of direct and indirect speech. For example, Tacitus reports the trials of Thrasea Paetus, Barea Soranus and his daughter Servilia, and presents abbreviated versions of the speeches given in the Senate by the prosecution and the defence.[27] Pliny appears to quote from the trial of Fannia, Helvidius the younger, Herennius Senecio and Arulenus Rusticus before Domitian in AD 93. Senecio, on trial for composing a life of Helvidius the elder, said in his defence that Fannia had requested him to write it:

> Mettius Carus [prosecuting] demanded in a threatening tone if this was true. She replied that it was. Had she lent Senecio her husband's *commentarii*? 'Yes.' Did her mother know of this? 'No.'[28]

The Roman nobles in *exitus* literature are more reserved than the outspoken Alexandrian Greeks. Nevertheless Epictetus composed a fictional dialogue between the elder Helvidius Priscus and Vespasian in which Priscus bluntly and provocatively discusses Vespasian's order for him not to attend Senate meetings. Although this speech may resemble similar examples from *exitus* literature, it is based on a discourse between Cicero and Caesar in 49 BC:[29]

[23] Cf. the suicide of Gallus, Prefect of Egypt, in 26 BC (p. 74). [24] Tac. *Ann.* 15.62–4.
[25] Tac. *Ann.* 16.34–5. Cf. the similar fates of Julius Vestinus (16.14–15) and Ostorius Scapula (15.68–9).
[26] Plin. *Ep.* 3.16.6. [27] Tac. *Ann.* 16.22–35. [28] *Ibid.* 7.19.5. [29] Dio 65.12; Cic. *Att.* 9.18.1.

Helvidius said: 'It is in your power not to allow me to be a member of the Senate, but so long as I am one I must attend its meetings.'
Vespasian said: 'Very well then, but when you attend hold your peace.'
'Do not ask for my opinion and I will hold my peace.'
'But I must ask for your opinion.'
'And I must answer what seems to me right.'
'But if you speak, I shall put you to death.'
'Well, when did I ever tell you I was immortal?'[30]

Exitus literature was a phenomenon of the first century AD only. By the late first century AD, prominent writers were criticising the worthless sacrifices of the martyrs. Tacitus ends his eulogy of Agricola not with a trial and noble death scene, but a bitter attack on the Roman martyrs:

To me those are not heroes who gain fame by a vote-winning death (*ambitiosa morte inclaruerunt*). My hero is he who can win praise without death.[31]

Tacitus uses the terminology of electoral bribery (*ambitus*), claiming that the heroes of *exitus* literature were illegally and unfairly winning glory through their martyrdom. Martial and Epictetus also criticise pointless martyrdom.[32] Whether Tacitus really disapproved of the martyrs of *exitus* literature is debatable. There is little criticism of them in the *Annals*, where their presence is central to Tacitus' story. Tacitus' 'disapproval' needs to be seen in the context of his defence of Agricola, and, by implication, all those like himself and Pliny who had survived and prospered under the tyranny of Domitian.

The evidence suggests that *exitus* literature consisted of short biographical pamphlets, episodic and eulogistic, which focused primarily on the death scene (usually suicide) and last words of the martyr. Some examples recorded trial scenes with dialogue in direct and indirect speech, but there is no evidence that they imitated the form of minutes. Although the impertinence of some defendants may have been included in the stories, there is little similarity between the calm suicides of the Roman nobles and the Alexandrians who are taken to their executions while abusing the emperors. The production and circulation of such stories among the elite could provide an insight into the origin of the Alexandrian stories, although the latter clearly circulated beyond the elite.[33]

[30] Arr. *Epict. diss*. 1.2.19–24. [31] Tac. *Agr*. 42.4.
[32] E.g. Martial *Ep*. 1.8; Arr. *Epict. diss*. 1.1.26–7. [33] See pp. 112–19.

EMPERORS AND THEIR GREEK SUBJECTS

The stories of confrontations between emperors and their Greek subjects survive mainly in the form of anecdotes but are developed further in several literary works, such as the *Life of Secundus the Silent Philosopher* and Philostratus' *Life of Apollonius of Tyana*. In many of these confrontations the Greeks are as outspoken as their counterparts in the *Acta Alexandrinorum* stories. Many emperors are attested to have tolerated curt and insolent remarks from their Greek subjects; others punished such behaviour.[34] Several Greek writers, such as Dio Chrysostom and Favorinus, also advertised that they had suffered exile at the hands of an emperor.

Philostratus provides many anecdotes about Greeks acting as audaciously as the Alexandrian Greeks in the presence of the emperors in his *Lives of the Sophists*, written *c.* AD 230–8. An ambassador of Seleucia named Alexander upset Antoninus Pius when he felt that Pius' attention was beginning to wane by shouting: 'Pay attention to me Caesar!'[35] Herodes Atticus insulted Marcus Aurelius with 'an aggressive and unguarded tongue', before stalking out of the courtroom. The prefect, Bassus, said that Herodes evidently wished to die for his behaviour.[36] Another Greek orator named Philiscus offended Caracalla during a meeting.[37]

There are numerous anecdotes about confrontations between Hadrian and his Greek subjects in which they are punished by the emperor.[38] Favorinus, a Hellenised Gaul, petitioned Hadrian on behalf of his fatherland. In court he stated that he suspected that he would not only lose his case, but be insulted as well, and said that his teacher had told him in a dream to serve his country as well as himself.[39] He was exiled.[40] A third-century AD papyrus preserves a work by Favorinus entitled *On Exile*, in which he claims to have been exiled to Chios by a tyrant for bravely expressing his freedom of speech.[41] During Trajan's reign, the architect Apollodorus did

[34] E.g. Augustus did not punish the Alexandrian historian Timagenes for remarks made in his histories, on which see Raaflaub and Salmons 1990: 442–3. On another occasion he punished a Spartan noble for insolence (Plut. *Reg. et imp. apophth*. 207.14). Claudius (Suet. *Claud*. 15.4) and Vespasian (Suet. *Vesp*. 13) allegedly endured such behaviour good-naturedly.

[35] Philostr. *VS* 2.1, 2.5; Cf. *CPJ* II 158 vi.6–7 and *SB* VI 9213 ii.11–12, both cited on p. 79.

[36] Philostr. *VS* 2.1; cf. Caesar to the Alexandrian Hermaiscus in *CPJ* II 157 iii.3–4: 'You must be eager to die, having such contempt for death as to answer me with such insolence.'

[37] Philostr. *VS* 2.30.

[38] See Bowersock 1969: 51–3; Swain 1989: 150–8; Stertz 1993: 612–28; Bowie 1997: 1–15.

[39] Dio 69.3.3–6; Philostr. *VS* 1.8; SHA *Hadr*. 15.13.

[40] The Athenians and Corinthians pulled down statues of him (Philostr. *VS* 1.8; Dio Chrys. *Or*. 37).

[41] *P.Marm*. 1 (see Roberts 1955: plate 18).

not value Hadrian's ideas and contributions to his plans and allegedly told him: 'Go away and draw your pumpkins. You do not know anything about this!' Hadrian executed him when he became emperor for his outspokenness.[42] Hadrian is also alleged to have punished Dionysius of Miletus, Eudaemon, Heliodorus and an historian named Cephalion.[43] Many of these men later regained imperial favour, suggesting that the severity and extent of the quarrels have been exaggerated in the sources. Favorinus had regained imperial favour by the 140s.[44] Hadrian appointed Dionysius to several procuratorships and enrolled him as a 'fellow' of the Alexandrian Museum.[45] Both Eudaemon and Heliodorus became Hadrianic Prefects of Egypt. Many of these anecdotes probably originated from the 'philosophers' themselves. Favorinus, in particular, liked to advertise that he had been punished for taking a firm stance with the emperor. The stories of his confrontations with Hadrian may come from a dramatic account of his dealings with the emperor in his lost memoirs.[46] The story of his court appearance before Hadrian has certain similarities with the *Acta Alexandrinorum* stories, with Favorinus outwitting his judge with a clever answer.[47] Similarly Dio Chrysostom, who was exiled by Domitian, claims to have openly abused the emperor: '[If] I narrate the course of my exile, men will say not that I am lamenting, but far rather that I am boasting.'[48] Hadrian also is cast in the role of judge in the *Sententiae Hadriani*, a collection of civil law cases which were judged by Hadrian and are recorded in the form of trial minutes. The texts were collected together in the third century AD. The stated aim of the cases presented in the *Sententiae Hadriani*, which may be wholly or partially fictional, was to improve literacy in both Greek and Latin.[49]

One particular group of outspoken Greeks, the Cynics, were frequently punished for their insolent comments to emperors. Cynic philosophers were popular in Alexandria. Dio Chrysostom states that the city contained 'no small number of that sect', and that they hung around on street corners, stringing together the type of rough and insolent jokes that belonged in a marketplace.[50] Both Nero and Vespasian exiled a Cynic named Demetrius from Rome.[51] Demetrius allegedly told Nero: 'You threaten me with death,

[42] Dio 69.4.1–5; see Ridley 1989: 551–65 on the historicity of this story.
[43] On Dionysius see Dio 69.3.5; on Eudaemon and Heliodorus see SHA *Hadr*. 15.1–5; on Cephalion see Suda s.v. Cephalion or Cephalon.
[44] Gellius *NA* 2.26.1, 4.1.1, 20.1.1. [45] Philostr. *VS* 1.22. [46] Bowie 1997: 5, 11.
[47] Anderson 1986: 1. [48] Dio Chrys. *Or*. 45.1.
[49] On these texts see Schiller 1971: 303–6; Lewis 1991: 267–80.
[50] Dio Chrys. *Or*. 32.8–9. [51] See Kindstrand 1980: 83–98.

but nature threatens you.'[52] A Cynic named Isidorus also criticised Nero.[53] Lucian tells the story of a fictional second-century AD Cynic, Peregrinus, who sailed to Italy from Alexandria, where he had been a disciple of the Cynic Agathobolus: 'Straight off the boat he began a campaign of invective, especially against the emperor.'[54] A Cynic named Diogenes was flogged at Vespasian's command for denouncing Titus' relationship with the Jewish princess Berenice. His companion, Heras, was executed for a similar denunciation.[55] It has been suggested that these Cynics are the Diogenes of *P.Oxy*. XX 2264 and the Heraius of *P.Oxy*. XVIII 2177.[56] This identification may be correct, as a reference is made to Heraius' 'disciples' in *P.Oxy*. XVIII 2177 fr. II ii.2–5. It would be wrong however to see all the Alexandrian Greeks as Cynic philosophers on the basis of this single case. Nonetheless, I find it likely that the slogans of these Cynics could have influenced the contemporary humour found in the *Acta Alexandrinorum* literature.[57]

The *Life of Secundus* tells the story of a supposedly historical confrontation between Hadrian and an Athenian philosopher named Secundus, which acts as a framework for the series of twenty questions and answers that follow it.[58] Secundus is perhaps the Athenian orator mentioned in other sources, although, instead of demonstrating his oratory, the philosopher in this story had taken a vow of silence.[59] A section of the life was discovered in a third-century AD papyrus, suggesting that the story was composed in the second century AD.[60] The story of their encounter focuses on Hadrian testing the resolve of Secundus to remain silent. Despite Hadrian's attempts to make him speak, Secundus maintained his silence 'neither ashamed nor afraid of the emperor'.[61] Hadrian grew angry and summoned an executioner:

> I do not want any man to live who refuses to speak to emperor Hadrian. Take him away and punish him![62]

However, Hadrian later spared Secundus, marvelling at his resolve, and he and Secundus communicated through writing tablets. The story of Secundus has similarities with the trial scenes in the *Acta Alexandrinorum* stories.[63] The hero is taken before an emperor, and questioned. In the face

[52] Arr. *Epict. diss*. 1.25.22. Cf. Suet. *Vesp*. 13; Dio 66.13.2–3 on Demetrius' encounter with Vespasian.
[53] Suet. *Ner*. 39. [54] Lucian *De mort. Peregr*. 18. [55] Dio 66.15.4–5.
[56] On these texts see pp. 82–4, 126–7. [57] Wilcken 1909: 836 n. 1; Rostovtzeff 1957: 112, 520.
[58] Perry 1964: 68–91 provides a text. [59] Philostr. *VS* 1.26; Suda s.v. Secundus.
[60] *P.Ross.Georg*. I 17 (provenance unknown) preserves three columns corresponding closely to Perry 1964: 72 l. 20–74 l. 3, 74 ll. 6–14, 74 ll. 17–20.
[61] Perry 1964: 72 ll. 8–9. [62] Perry 1964: 72 ll. 14–15.
[63] Perry 1964: 6–8; Daly and Suchier 1939: 51.

of death, Secundus continues, martyr-like, to defy Hadrian's command to speak. Until Hadrian decides to spare Secundus, he is portrayed as an unreasonable tyrant. Secundus is idealised and dramatised as a man who fearlessly accepts death in defence of his principles and in defiance of the emperor. His resolve to remain silent is seen by the emperor as impudence.

Philostratus was commissioned to compose the *Life of Apollonius of Tyana*, an historical philosopher who lived in the first century AD, by the empress Julia Domna, and finished the work around AD 217. Apollonius had voiced opposition to the regimes of Nero and Domitian and in the story is tried three times: by the consul of AD 66, Telesinus; by Nero's Praetorian Prefect, Tigellinus; and by the emperor Domitian.

The story of Apollonius' trial before Domitian is similar to those in the *Acta Alexandrinorum* literature. Apollonius' fate has been decided before the trial; in a pre-trial hearing, Apollonius remarked that Domitian ought not to be his judge because he is already convinced of his guilt.[64] The trial itself is portrayed as a grand occasion, with many prominent figures present to witness the conviction.[65] While Domitian is shown to be hostile and tyrannical, other Romans, such as Telesinus and the Praetorian Prefect Aelianus, are portrayed as friendly and supportive.[66] Apollonius is depicted as brave and courageous. He is as rude to Domitian as the Alexandrian Greeks are to their judges, at one point refusing to even look at him, and, when ordered to keep his eyes on 'the god of all mankind', he looked upwards, to show that he was looking at Zeus. Apollonius' meetings with Telesinus, Tigellinus and Domitian all take the form of short questions and answers, during which he outwits and mocks his judges. In the following exchange Apollonius demonstrates his insolent wit, for which he wins the applause of the audience:

'Tell me', he [Domitian] said. 'You went out of your house on a certain day and you travelled into the country and sacrificed the boy. I would like to know for whom.'

Apollonius, as if he were rebuking a child, replied: 'Good words, I beseech you. For if I did leave my house, I was in the country. And if this was so then I did offer a sacrifice. And if I offered it then I ate of it. But let these assertions be proved by trustworthy witnesses!'

[64] Philostr. *VA* 7.32–4; cf. the similar complaints made by Philo and Isidorus regarding their own 'unfair' hearings (pp. 17, 32–3, 39–45).

[65] Cf. *CPJ* II 156a ii.5–8.

[66] E.g. Philostr. *VA* 4.40, 7.15–21; cf. the friendly senators at the trial of Isidorus, *CPJ* II 156a i and ii.13–15.

Apollonius, like one of the Alexandrian Greeks, delivers a damning condemnation of the emperor's reign: 'The cities are ruined, the islands full of fugitives, the mainland of groaning, the armies of cowardice, the senate of suspicion.'[67] The story ends with a miracle, as one of the *Acta Alexandrinorum* stories does, with Apollonius vanishing from the courthouse, citing Apollo from Homer's *Iliad*: 'You will not kill me, since I am not mortal.'[68]

The Greeks in these stories of their heated confrontations with emperors therefore often match the Alexandrian heroes in their rudeness and lack of respect. The two most developed stories of such confrontations, those of Secundus and Apollonius, have particular similarities with the *Acta Alexandrinorum* literature. The writings of Philostratus, the papyrus copies of the *Life of Secundus* and Favorinus' *On Exile* show that tales of Greeks confronting emperors were highly popular in the third century, and that writers were producing works similar in form and tone to the *Acta Alexandrinorum* stories in this period.

THE JEWISH TRADITIONS

Jewish writers of the Principate, such as Philo, Josephus, the writers of *2* and *4 Maccabees*, and the writers of the Talmud, tell stories of Jews confronting tyrants and Roman emperors.[69] A favoured form of these stories is a trial scene or a dialogue, recording what was allegedly said in direct speech.

2 and *4 Maccabees* contain accounts of the trials of Eleazar and a mother and her seven sons before King Antiochus IV, and their subsequent executions, written by Hellenised Jews. The story is set during the Maccabean revolt of 164 BC against the Seleucids, who had occupied Judaea. Only a basic version of the trial scene is given in *2 Maccabees* 6:16–7:42, believed to have been written between 124 and 63 BC. In this version all nine martyrs individually speak to Antiochus, refuse to comply with his demands and are executed. The story is greatly expanded in *4 Maccabees*, believed to have been written in the first or second century AD, by a greater focus on the trial itself and on the dialogue between Antiochus and the martyrs.[70] In the same manner as a Roman emperor, Antiochus sits in a makeshift courtroom, surrounded by his assessors and guards:

[67] Philostr. *VA* 8.1–6; cf. *CPJ* II 159b ii.6–13.
[68] Homer, *Iliad* 22.13; cf. the miracle in *CPJ* II 157 iii.13–18 (see p. 95).
[69] On Philo and Josephus see pp. 32–3.
[70] Josephus is no longer considered to be the writer of *4 Maccabees,* as Eusebius claimed (*Hist. eccl.* 3.10.6). See also Bickermann 1976: 275–81; Willem van Henten 1986: 136–49; Williams 1992: 105–49.

The tyrant Antiochus, accompanied by his councillors, sat in judgement on a certain high place with his troops drawn up around him in full armour.[71]

Antiochus, referred to as 'tyrant' throughout the account, commands the conversation with the martyrs. The writer of *4 Maccabees* retold the story to prove that reason could withstand torture and overcome any passion. He chose to present his thesis in the form of a trial scene instead of producing a long, philosophical tract on the virtue of Reason, perhaps because this was the form of the popular fiction in his day.

Jewish Rabbinical literature preserves several stories about Jewish embassies to Rome and about confrontations between Jewish sages and Roman nobles, some of which ended in martyrdom. The stories are preserved in the Palestinian and Babylonian Talmuds, which were written between the third and sixth centuries AD but were based on traditions collected into the Mishnah around AD 200.[72] Dialogues are preserved between Jewish sages and Roman nobles, such as those between Tineius Rufus and Rabbi Akiba,[73] Vespasian and Rabbi Johann ben Zakkai, in which Zakkai predicts Vespasian's accession,[74] and 'Antoninus son of Asverus' and Rabbi Judah har-Nasi.[75] In the dialogues the Rabbi outshines the emperor in wisdom and moral stature, but relations between the two are good. The subject matter of some of these dialogues is historical, but much of the material is fictional or legendary.[76] One example is the legend in the Talmud of Rabbi Simeon ben Yohai's embassy to Rome, which provided an explanation for the improved relations between Rome and the Jews under the Antonines. On arrival, he found that the emperor's daughter was possessed by a demon. In return for exorcising the demon, Simeon and his fellow ambassadors were offered anything from the imperial treasury. They hunted there for the emperor's 'anti-Jewish directive', and destroyed it.[77]

One story set in Egypt during the Jewish Revolt of 115/6–17 is comparable to an *Acta Alexandrinorum* story, *CPJ* II 157, which is also set under Trajan:[78]

In the days of Trajan the wicked, a son was born to him on 9th Ab,[79] and they [the Jews] were fasting. His daughter died on the feast of Hannukkah. His wife sent

[71] *4 Maccabees* 5.1. [72] See Schürer 1973–86: 68–118. [73] See Herr 1971: 123–50.
[74] Aboth de Rabbi Nathan version A chapter 4 p. 22 (trans. in Schäffer 1995: 137–8).
[75] Either Marcus Aurelius, son of Verus, or Caracalla, son of Severus.
[76] See Wallach 1940–1: 259–86; Smallwood 1976: 485–6; Birley 1987: 193; Avi-Yonah 1962: 38–41.
[77] Babylonian Talmud: *Me'ilah* 17a–b. See Loewe 1961: 114–15.
[78] As noted in Loewe 1961: 105–22. [79] The anniversary of the destruction of the Temple.

him a message saying: 'Instead of subduing the barbarians, come and subdue the Jews who have rebelled against you.' He thought that the trip would take ten days, but he came in five. On arrival he found them studying the Torah and immersed in the following verse 'the Lord shall bring a nation against thee from afar, from the end of the earth, even as the eagle glides.'[80] He said to them: 'Why are you so occupied?' They said to him: 'With so and so (i.e. the verse).' He said to them: 'It refers to a certain person who thought that it would take ten days to make the trip, and I arrived in five days.' He set the legions around them and killed them. [Trajan] said to the women: 'Obey my legions, and I shall not kill you.' They said to him: 'What you did to the ones who have fallen, do also to us who are yet standing.' He mingled their blood with the blood of their men, until the blood flowed into the ocean as far as Cyprus.[81]

Trajan and Plotina were childless, and Trajan himself never personally visited Egypt, which shows the story to be fictional. Nonetheless the same ideas influenced both the *Acta Alexandrinorum* stories and the popular literature circulating in the same period in Palestine. In both stories the empress Plotina has turned the emperor against the Greeks/Jews.[82] Both accounts involve sea journeys, Rome to Egypt, Egypt to Rome. In both Trajan is accused of not doing his duty. The Alexandrian Hermaiscus tells Trajan that he 'ought to help his own people [i.e. nobles]' rather than 'play advocate for the impious Jews'.[83] For the Jews, Trajan should be campaigning against barbarians, not Jews. The respective gods play a role in each story. Serapis' statue ominously begins to sweat, and the Jews are depicted here as reading the Torah.[84] Hermaiscus and the Jews suffer execution. Both stories are told using interchanging direct speech and emphasise the bravery of the defendants.

By the sixth century AD the 'legend of the Ten Martyrs', in which ten Jewish sages were tortured and executed following a confrontation with a Roman official, had developed. While the list of the ten martyrs differs considerably in the various sources, the accounts may have a historical basis in executions which occurred during the reigns of Trajan and Hadrian.[85] The accounts typically emphasise the heroism and bravery of the martyrs. One of the ten martyrs, Rabbi Akiba, was allegedly tried by Tinneius Rufus in connection with the Bar Kochba revolt.[86] He was found guilty, and brutally executed, by having the flesh torn from his body. But Akiba remained calm to the end. His level of endurance prompted Rufus to retort:

[80] Deuteronomy 28:49.
[81] Palestinian Talmud, Sukkah 5:1, 55B (trans. in Mélèze-Modrezejewski 1995: 209–13).
[82] *CPJ* II 157 ii.8–14. [83] *CPJ* II 157 iii.10–13. [84] *CPJ* II 157 iii.14. [85] See Zeitlin 1945–6: 1–16.
[86] But see Schäffer 1980: 113–30 on Akiba's connection to the revolt.

'Are you a wizard, or totally insensitive to pain?' 'I am neither' answered Akiba, and gave a deathbed statement of his faith.[87]

Two of the ten martyrs were the brothers Pappus and Lullianus, who were allegedly executed by Trajan during the 'war of *Kitos*'.[88] Their execution is told in the form of a dialogue between Trajan and the accused, in which the pair are insolent to the 'wicked' and 'unworthy' king judging them:

> When Trajan sentenced Pappus and Lullianus his brother to death in Lydia, he said to them: 'Are you of the same people as Hanniah, Mishael and Azariah? Let your God deliver you from my hand!' They said to him: 'Hanniah, Mishael and Azariah were worthy men and Nebuchadnezzar worthy to have a miracle performed through him. You, however, are a wicked king unworthy that a miracle should be performed through you. And we deserve death by the hand of heaven. If you do not kill us, God has many destructive agents . . . which could harm us. But the end will be that God will exact vengeance from you for our blood.'

The story ends with the statement 'it was reported that before he had left that place there arrived messengers from Rome who split his skull open', possibly based on the fate of Quietus, executed by order of the Senate early in the reign of Hadrian.[89]

Josephus' historical works often mention Jewish embassies which went to Rome. His story of rival Samaritan and Jewish embassies meeting Claudius has numerous similarities with the *Acta Alexandrinorum* stories, in particular the trial of Isidorus.[90] The background to this meeting was violence between Jews and Samaritans, just as violence between Jews and Greeks occasioned the embassies to Gaius and Claudius. Many Jews had been killed because the Roman procurator Cumanus had sided with the Samaritans, allegedly in return for a bribe. Like Philo's Flaccus, Cumanus is portrayed as the ally of the Jews' enemy. The governor of Syria, Quadratus, referred the matter to the emperor and sent two rival delegations and Cumanus to Claudius in Rome. Claudius assigned a day for the case, just as he granted Isidorus a day. Claudius' advisers favoured the case of Cumanus and the Samaritans. Similarly the two senators in *CPJ* II 156a col. i appear to favour the case of the Alexandrian Greeks. Josephus believes that the Jews would have been unsuccessful, had it not been for the intervention of Agrippa II; his father's friendship with Claudius was allegedly a major factor

[87] Mishnah, *Nazir* 7.1. (trans. in Lieberman, 1939–44: 420).

[88] 'Kitos' refers to the Roman general who crushed the Jewish Revolt in AD 115–17, perhaps L. Quietus or Quintus Turbo who held commands in Mesopotamia and Egypt respectively. See Rokeah 1972: 79–84.

[89] Sifra, *Emor* 9.5 (trans. in Herr 1972: 107). Dio 69.2.5 and SHA *Hadr.* 5.8 refer to Quietus' fate.

[90] Joseph. *AJ* 20.118–36.

in the outcome of Isidorus' trial. Agrippa II entreated the empress, Agrippina to persuade Claudius to give the matter more careful consideration; in another Alexandrian story the Jewish delegates also approached the empress, and Trajan opposed the Alexandrian Greeks 'having already been won over by Plotina'.[91] Cumanus was exiled and the Samaritan delegates executed, echoing the fate of Flaccus and some of the Alexandrian Greek ambassadors in AD 41.[92]

The evidence therefore shows that Jewish writers also used the trial scene format to compose the stories of their martyrs, although there is little actual interrogation in the Jewish trial scenes, and considerably more emphasis on the depiction of the martyrs and the actual martyrdom itself. Nonetheless, there are similarities with the Alexandrian stories in the trial scene in Philo's *Legatio* and the Talmudic story of Trajan's arrival in Egypt.

CHRISTIAN LITERATURE

A large amount of the Christian literature which was composed and circulated during the Principate was constructed around dramatic trial scenes. I will discuss here the accounts of the trial of Jesus, the trial scenes in Acts, the *Apocryphal Acts* and the Christian martyr acts.

During the latter part of Tiberius' reign, between AD 30 and 37, the Roman procurator of Judea, Pontius Pilate, tried and executed a Jew named Jesus. The trial of Jesus is recorded in Roman, Jewish and Syrian sources.[93] The main literary accounts for the trial itself are the four canonical gospels, Matthew, Mark, Luke and John, which were written by Hellenised Jews living somewhere in the eastern Roman Empire and used material which had circulated in oral and written forms. The generally accepted dates of these works are AD 70 for Mark, 80 for Matthew, 85 for Luke and 90 for John.[94] Accounts of the trial also appeared in the 'apocryphal' gospels. Although some of these were later adaptations of the canonical gospels, others were produced long before the concept of the canon developed and were frequently cited by second-century AD Church Fathers.[95] The story of the trial had probably reached Egypt by the AD 40s and early versions

[91] *CPJ* II 157 ii.13–14. [92] Joseph. *BJ* 2.245 states that three Samaritans were executed.

[93] Joseph. *AJ* 18.63–4. See Baras 1987: 338–48 on the *Testimonium Flavianum*; Tac. *Ann*. 15.44; *BSanhedrin* 43a (trans. in Légasse 1997: 4–5); Cureton 1855: 43–8 (cited in Légasse 1997: 3–4).

[94] As reported in the *ABD* III: pp. 912–32 (John); *ABD* IV: pp. 397–403 (Luke), 541–57 (Mark), 622–41 (Matthew). *P.Ryl*. III 457 shows that John was being read in Egypt by the early second century AD.

[95] On the apocryphal gospels see Elliott 1994. Grant 1965 discusses the development of the canon. Van den Hoek 1996: 43–62 discusses Clement of Alexandria's use of *apocrypha*. Porter 1997: 795–803 discusses the relationship between canonical and apocryphal gospels.

of it were therefore contemporary with the trial literature inspired by the embassies to Gaius and Claudius.[96]

The gospels do not fall neatly into any one genre of ancient Graeco-Roman literature.[97] They appear to have gradually developed in the decades following Jesus' death and consist of two essential parts. The first is a collection of the sayings and miraculous deeds of Jesus bound together with a small amount of narrative. The collecting together of the sayings of wise men, such as Socrates and Epicurus, was common in the Graeco-Roman period. One purpose of the gospels was to show that Jesus was not simply another philosopher or magician, as Greeks and Romans would naturally consider him to be.[98]

The second part of each gospel focuses on Jesus' trial and crucifixion, the purpose of which was to show that Jesus was a messiah and not a common political rebel, as anti-Christian polemic claimed.[99] Consequently the gospels exonerate the Romans from responsibility for Jesus' death and portray Pilate as a sympathetic figure who wants to help Jesus instead of the inflexible, harsh and antagonistic procurator mentioned, albeit with some exaggeration, by Philo and Josephus.[100] They also emphasise Jesus' compliance with the Roman regime.[101] The blame is placed upon others, usually the Jews, who chose to free the murderer Barabas instead of Jesus and who led Jesus away to execution.[102] However, Jesus suffered crucifixion, a cruel and degrading penalty which could only be inflicted by the Romans, and was reserved, in theory, for only the lower classes involved in crimes such as treason and armed insurrection.[103] Judea was a particularly volatile region in the first century AD, and popular leaders, often with messianic claims, frequently disturbed the peace.[104] Jesus was tried as a political rebel.

[96] The evidence is anecdotal. The apostle Mark allegedly arrived in Egypt in AD 43, where he composed a second gospel, on which see Euseb. *Hist. eccl.* 2.16; *Chron*. Claudius year 3 (p. 179); Smith 1973; Elliott 1994: 148–9. 'Western' Acts 18:25 reports that Apollos had been instructed in Christianity in Alexandria before visiting Corinth in AD 51/2–52/3 and Ephesus in AD 55 with Paul.

[97] On the literary environment of the New Testament writings see Aune 1987. Burridge 1992 suggests that the gospels belong to the genre of ancient biography.

[98] As Paul was considered to be in Acts 17:17–21.

[99] E.g. the writer cited in Lactant. *Div. inst.* 5.3.4. See also Horbury 1984: 183–95.

[100] Philo *Leg.* 301; Joseph. *BJ* 2.169–77; *AJ* 18.55–64, 85–7. See also Bond 1998.

[101] E.g. Jesus' ambiguous, but not openly seditious, response when asked whether or not it was correct to pay tribute: Mark 12:13–17; Matthew 22:15–22; Luke 20:20–6; *Thomas* 100; *P.Egerton* 2 fr. 2 recto. See also Bruce 1984: 249–63. Cf. Jesus' advice that a man should walk two miles when asked to walk one, a conformist reference to the unpopular Roman practice of requisitioning; Matthew 5:41; cf. Luke 6:29.

[102] Luke 23:25–6.

[103] Hengel 1977; Garnsey 1970: 126–9.

[104] See Crossan 1991: 137–67, 451–2; for the case of one 'brigand', Theudas, see Joseph. *AJ* 20.97–9; Acts 5:36.

The Jewish authorities accused him of 'subverting our nation, forbidding us to give tribute to Caesar, and claiming to be Christ, a king' and of 'stirring up the people all over Judea with his teaching'.[105] Jesus' offence was his claim to be the 'king of the Jews'. In John the Jewish crowd says: 'Anyone who claims to be a king opposes Caesar.'[106] Jesus was dressed as a 'king' prior to execution and mocked.[107] Over his cross the Romans erected a placard proclaiming 'Jesus of Nazareth, king of the Jews'. It was standard Roman practice to publicise the offence of the condemned in this way.[108]

The trial scenes in the gospels resemble trial minutes, as the *Acta Alexandrinorum* stories do. Second-century Church Fathers presumed that the minutes of Jesus' trial would have been kept, and could have been accessed.[109] John provides a setting for the trial: 'early in the morning' outside Pilate's *praetorium*.[110] The trial scene is also told in direct speech, with abrupt, terse questions and answers exchanged between Pilate and Jesus. The account in the synoptic gospels is brief:

> The governor asked him: 'Are you the king of the Jews?'
> 'It is as you say it', Jesus replied.
> When he was accused by the chief priests and the elders, he gave no answer.
> Then Pilate asked him: 'Do you not hear the testimony they are bringing against you?'
> But Jesus made no reply.[111]

The focus of the trial scene is the depiction of Jesus, who is portrayed as a heroic martyr, and the accounts emphasise that he, as Socrates had done, deliberately chose a path which would lead to his own death. When a disciple attempted to obstruct Jesus' arrest, Jesus told him:

> Put your sword back in its place. Do you think that I cannot appeal to my father and he will at once send me more than twelve legions of angels?[112]

Whereas Mark and Luke use the verb 'to expire' to record Jesus' death, Matthew and John use the phrases 'he gave up' and 'handed over' his spirit respectively.[113] The effect is also enhanced by the sympathetic portrayal of

[105] Luke 23:2–5. See Schneider 1984: 403–14. [106] John 19:12.
[107] Mark 15:16–29; Matthew 27:27–31; *Peter* 6–8. Cf. the similar story of the 'crowning' of Carabas in Philo *Flacc*. 36–9, which precipitated the Alexandrian riots in AD 38.
[108] Cf. Suet. *Calig.* 32.2; *Dom*. 10.1; Dio 54.7; Euseb. *Hist. eccl*. 5.1.44.
[109] See p. 99. [110] John 18:28.
[111] Matthew 27:11–12, cf. Mark 15:2–5. Luke 23:3–6 presents a slightly different version in which Pilate sends Jesus to Herod.
[112] Matthew 26:52–4; cf. John 10:18.
[113] Mark 15:37; Luke 23:46; Matthew 27:50; John 19:30; Paul continues this trend in e.g. Ephesians 5:2.

Pilate, who by offering Jesus a chance to prove his innocence shows the hero to have chosen his own fate and not to be swayed by temptation.

The trial of Jesus continued to be developed by other writers. In John, the trial has evolved into a more philosophical exchange between Pilate and Jesus, the purpose of which is to show that as Jesus' kingship was not an earthly, political, claim, he was no challenge to Roman authority. Jesus now often answers Pilate's questions tersely with questions of his own, just as the defendants in the *Acta Alexandrinorum* stories do:

> Pilate . . . asked him: 'Are you the king of the Jews?'
> 'Is that your own idea or did others talk to you about me?' Jesus asked.
> 'Am I a Jew?' Pilate replied. 'It was your people and your chief priests who handed you over to me. What is it you have done?'
> Jesus said: 'My kingdom is not of this world. If it were my servants would fight to prevent my arrest by the Jews. But now my kingdom is from another place.'
> 'You are a king then!' said Pilate.
> Jesus answered: 'You are right in saying I am a king. In fact, for this reason I was born and for this I came into the world, to tell the truth. Everyone on the side of truth listens to me.'
> 'What is truth?' Pilate asked.[114]

There are other similarities with the *Acta Alexandrinorum* stories, such as the shouts of the Jewish crowd which punctuate the passion narratives and the claim that Pilate's wife attempted to influence the verdict.[115] The trial was developed in Coptic apocryphal gospels to further exonerate Pilate, who became a saint in the Coptic Church, from blame.[116] The *Acta Pilati* also display this tendency.[117] A further trial scene, contained within the *Paradosis Pilati*, served a similar purpose by presenting the story of Pilate's own trial through a short, terse dialogue between Pilate and Caesar.[118]

[114] John 18:33–8. This last remark has been interpreted as an ironic jest or Pilate's inability to comprehend Jesus' claim.

[115] Mark 15:13–14; Matthew 27:24–5; Luke 23:20–3; John 19:14–15; Matthew 27:19. Cf. the shouts of the Alexandrian crowd in *P.Oxy*. XXV 2435 recto and verso; *SB* XVI 12255 and the claim in *CPJ* II 157 ii.8–10 that Plotina had influenced Trajan.

[116] Revillout 1904: nos. 10, 11. The former is a dialogue between Jesus and Pilatus in the *praetorium*, based loosely on John, but expanded. The latter is set before the Jewish crowd.

[117] On the *Acta Pilati* see Cameron 1982: 163–82; Elliott 1994: 169–85. The earliest manuscript is from the twelfth century AD, but earlier writers refer to a work of this name: in the second century AD (Justin *I Apol*. 35.9; 48.3; Tert. *Apol*. 5.21); the fourth century AD (Euseb. *Hist. eccl*. 1.9.3–4, 9.5.1; Epiphanius *Haer*. 50.1).

[118] Elliott 1994: 208–11. The later manuscripts are based on second-century AD traditions (*ibid*.: 164–225). Historically, Pilate was sent to Tiberius in Rome to answer charges levelled against him by the Samaritans (Joseph. *AJ* 18.88–9).

In Acts, which was written in the late first century AD by the author of Luke, Paul is tried on several occasions by the Roman authorities.[119] Paul's trials before Felix and Festus took place in the AD 50s–60s.[120] 'Luke' makes extensive use of legal terms in his account of the trials. On the basis of this, and the fact that the trial before Felix immediately follows the citation of an official letter, it has been argued that 'Luke' used official trial minutes in composing his account.[121] However, 'Luke' may have adapted the minutes or imitated the style of *acta*. The trial before Felix takes the form of a prosecution speech by Tertullus, followed by Paul's defence. In this trial Felix's wife Drusilla is present in the same way as empresses feature in the *Acta Alexandrinorum* stories.[122] The trial before Festus proceeds with short, interchanging dialogue, during which Paul appeals to Caesar.[123] Before Paul is sent to Caesar, he is brought before Festus and Agrippa II. An exchange in the dialogue, which focuses on the contrast between *mania* and *sophrosyne*, is reminiscent of a scene from an example of the *Acta Alexandrinorum* proper:[124]

> Festus shouted: 'You are mad, Paul. Your great learning has driven you mad.'
> Paul said: 'I am not mad, most excellent Festus. What I am saying is both true and reasonable.'[125]

> The emperor: 'Appian, we are accustomed to bring to their senses those who are mad or have lost their senses . . .'
> Appian: '. . . I am neither mad nor have lost my senses.'[126]

This suggests that such contrasts were typical motifs in trial stories rather than implies literary dependence.

Trial scenes also appear in the *Apocryphal Acts*, which were composed by unknown writers in the period AD 150–250.[127] In these stories the central apostle travels widely, preaching and converting many to Christianity, but in doing so offends an important figure, who tries and martyrs him. Paul and John were tried by emperors, Peter, Andrew and Thomas by Roman magistrates. The trial scenes are similar to those in the *Acta Alexandrinorum* stories in their use of caricatured historical personages, such as the

[119] See Head 1993: 415–44 on the variant texts of Acts, of which *P.Oxy.* XIII 1597 (third-fourth century AD) is an example.
[120] Felix was in office *c.* AD 52 and Festus from AD 60 to 62 (Tac. *Hist.* 5.9; Joseph. *AJ* 20.137–8). On the trials of Paul see Tajra 1989: 115–51.
[121] B. Winter 1993: 305–36. [122] E.g. *CPJ* II 157. [123] On which see Garnsey 1970: 75–6.
[124] Conzelmann 1987: 212. [125] Acts 26:24–5. [126] *CPJ* II 159b iv.9–v.2.
[127] See Elliott 1994: 229–30, 231–6, 303–6, 350–2, 390–2, 440–1 for ancient testimonies, manuscripts and dates of the Acts of Peter, Paul, John, Andrew and Thomas.

emperors.[128] The trial in the *Acts of John in Rome* is told in the form of short, abrupt, interchanging dialogue which follows the pattern 'Domitian said . . . John said . . .' John, like the Alexandrian gymnasiarchs, confronts Domitian without fear, before being exiled to Patmos.[129] In most of the *Apocryphal Acts*, however, the trial scene itself is secondary to the miracles, sufferings and deaths of the apostles. The *Acts of Paul*, for example, recounts the resurrection of one of Nero's cup-bearers and of a decapitated Paul. The trial itself is only briefly recorded:

> Paul was brought to him and he [Nero] insisted that he should be executed. And Paul said 'Caesar, I live not merely for a short time for my king. If you have me executed I shall rise again and appear to you . . .'[130]

Nero also appears in the *Acts of Peter*, where he expresses his anger at Agrippa for executing Peter, as he had wished to inflict more cruel punishments upon him.[131]

Typically in the Christian martyr acts, the defendant is taken before a Roman judge, usually the Roman governor, and ordered to sacrifice to the emperor. When forced into this conflict of loyalty between the law of the authorities and his religious beliefs, the Christian refuses to compromise and, after engaging in a lively exchange with his judge, is martyred. The *acta Christianorum*, like the *Acta Alexandrinorum* proper, are written in the form of trial minutes, although some adhere more closely to this format than others. Due to this, the possible relationship between the Christian and 'pagan' martyr acts was the subject of a lively debate in the early twentieth century. Bauer argued that the *Acta Alexandrinorum* stories imitated the form of trial minutes in the same way that many of the legendary Christian *passiones* did. He listed several parallels between the 'pagan' and 'Christian' martyr acts and discussed the relationship between them.[132] Others argued that these martyr acts had links with other martyr literature in the Roman Empire, forming a type of popular *Kleinliteratur*, and Geffcken believed that the *Acta Alexandrinorum* literature formed a model for the later Christian stories.[133] Musurillo, following the work of Delehaye, concluded that there

[128] Karasszon 1998: 21–8 suggests that the Agrippa of the *Acts of Peter* is based on King Agrippa I.

[129] The most recent edition and discussion of the text is in Junod and Kaestli 1983: 835–86, 857–8. The story, originally part of the *Acts of John*, was detached and circulated independently. Although the earliest extant versions come from the fourth century AD, Tertullian (Tert. *De praescr. haeret.* 36.2), writing in the second century AD, knew the story. For later traditions on John's trial before Domitian see Euseb. *Hist. eccl.* 3.18; *Chron.* Domitian year 14 (p. 192); Jerome *Comm. on Matt.* 20.23; see also Fitton 1974: 193–4.

[130] *The Martyrdom of Paul* 4 (Elliott 1994: 387); see Bauckham 1993: 105–52.

[131] Elliott 1994: 424–6.

[132] Bauer 1901: 29–47.

[133] Reitzenstein 1904: 326–32; Geffcken 1910: 497.

were only superficial similarities between both sets of acts, principally in the presentation of the stories as dramatic trial scenes with lively exchanges and aphorisms between the participants. He argued that, although the Alexandrians and the Christians showed the same heroic resistance, the caricatured officials presiding over the trials were depicted in a less hostile manner in the latter group of stories. He attributed these links to the fact that both the Alexandrian and the Christian communities had suffered at the hands of the Romans, and independently strove to preserve the memory of their heroes in the same way.[134]

The Christian martyr acts are set dramatically in the period from *c*. AD 100 to the Diocletianic persecutions, roughly contemporary to the *Acta Alexandrinorum* stories. Yet whilst the popularity of the latter waned in the third century, the composition of the Christian acts continued for centuries. However, the Christian acts did not displace the *Acta Alexandrinorum*. By the time Christianity became established in Alexandria, the late third–early fourth century, the *Acta Alexandrinorum* were already defunct. Christian martyr literature may have filled the literary void left by the decline of the *Acta Alexandrinorum* stories.[135] From the fourth century onwards the Christian martyr acts, hagiographical stories and also the Coptic martyrdoms became very popular in Egypt.[136]

Later reworkings of the *acta Christianorum* make a comparison with the *Acta Alexandrinorum* stories difficult. Many of the earliest versions of the *acta Christianorum* date from centuries after the martyrdom and display a high level of editorial embellishment and 'improvement'. The *Acts of Justin*, for example, set *c*. AD 165, survive in three versions, in manuscripts ranging from the eighth to the twelfth century. In Eusebius' fourth-century AD account of another martyr act, Apollonius was a Roman citizen tried at Rome by the Praetorian Prefect Perennis *c*. AD 190–5, yet in the later manuscript tradition Apollonius had become an Alexandrian tried by a proconsul in Asia.[137]

The *Acts of Phileas*, set in Alexandria before the prefect Culcianus, who was in office *c*. AD 300–4, is preserved in a contemporary papyrus copy.[138] This is an example of the *acta Christianorum* which survives in its original form, and it exhibits several similarities with the *Acta Alexandrinorum* stories. The author focuses more on the dialogue than later writers and his story uses the same stock phrases and themes which can be found in the

[134] Musurillo 1954: 262 and 1972; Delehaye 1921: 150.
[135] On the decline of the stories see pp. 138–9.
[136] On the Egyptian Coptic martyr acts see Reymond and Barns 1973.
[137] Euseb. *Hist. eccl*. 5.21.
[138] *P.Bodm*. XX. Musurillo 1972: xlvi–xlvii dates the hand to the early fourth century AD.

Acta Alexandrinorum stories.[139] The *acta Christianorum* usually begin with the judge asking the martyr his name, and being told 'I am a Christian'. Yet Culcianus opens the dialogue by telling Phileas: 'You have killed *many men* by not sacrificing.' He continues that a certain Pierus had saved many by *submitting*. Similarly Claudius tells Isidorus: 'You have killed *many men*.' Isidorus states that he had merely *submitted* to the will of Gaius in doing so. Thus the exact same phrase (πολλοὺς ἀπέκτεινας) is followed in both cases by the mention of an act of submission, using variants of the verb τάττω.[140] Phileas proudly describes himself as one of the '*archontes* of Alexandria', just as the heroes of the Alexandrian Greeks emphasise their high status as gymnasiarchs and ambassadors of the city. Culcianus also tells Phileas: 'If you were one of the uncultured . . . I should not spare you', and remarks that Phileas possesses 'such abundant resources that you can nourish and sustain not only yourself but an entire city', emphasising that Phileas also belongs to the cultured, well-born class.[141] The theme of *mania* and *sophrosyne* can also be seen:

> The prefect: 'Can you be reasonable?'
> Phileas answered: 'I am always reasonable (σωφρονῶ), and I exercise myself in good sense.[142]

Just before he is executed, Appian begs an emperor: 'Grant me one thing' (καὶ τοῦτο ἡμῖν χάρισαι), a request repeated by Phileas (καὶ σὺ ἐμοὶ τοῦτο χάρισαι).[143] A further comparison depends on the restoration of [ἀνηκόν]των rather than [προσηκόν]των in *CPJ* II 159b.[144]

Other examples of the *acta Christianorum* use phrases and themes found in the *Acta Alexandrinorum* stories. Several of the *acta Christianorum* display anti-Jewish tendencies.[145] The threats of the judges sound similar. Trajan says to the Alexandrian Hermaiscus: '*You must be eager to die*, having such contempt for death as to answer even me with such insolence'; Perennis says to the Christian Apollonius: '*You will be glad to die*, having taken this decision, Apollonius.'[146] While the Christian martyrs are usually more reserved than the pagans, some are very rude to their judge.[147] Carpus insolently tells the proconsul that he will not sacrifice to demons

[139] Schwartz 1984b: 207–9.
[140] *Acts of Phileas* ii.5–6; *CPJ* II 156d ll. 4–6. The phrase also appears in *SB* VI 9213 i.11.
[141] *Acts of Phileas* i.2–3, xi.9–11, cf. *CPJ* II 159b iv.15–v.8.
[142] *Acts of Phileas* ii.12–14. The theme also appears in the *Martyrdom of St Pionius* 20.2–3 and in the *Acta Alexandrinorum* in *CPJ* II 159b iv.9–v.2; see p. 159 on Acts.
[143] *CPJ* II 159b ii.15–iii.1, *Acts of Phileas* xi.4–5.
[144] *Acts of Phileas* iv.14–16; cf. *CPJ* II 159b iv.15–v.2, v.6–8. See pp. 193–4.
[145] E.g. *Acts of Polycarp*, *Martyrdom of St Pionius*.
[146] *CPJ* II 157 iii.3–4; *Acts of Apollonius* 29.
[147] E.g. *Acts of Tararchus, Probus and Andronicus* 7–9.

and their deceptive appearances (i.e. emperors), and calls for the emperor to be destroyed.[148] Apollonius speaks disrespectfully of Commodus, who merely rules on earth by the will of God.[149] Like the Alexandrian heroes, the Christian Andronicus emphasises both his noble status and that of his city: 'I am noble and son of the foremost city of Ephesus.'[150] The Christian martyrs are usually tortured prior to execution.[151] In the only example of the *Acta Alexandrinorum* to extend beyond the pronouncement of death, Antoninus suffered the punishment known as the *equus*, where he was tied to a wooden beam, with torches lit underneath and to the sides, a torture which was also inflicted upon Christians.[152] The contrast between 'king' and 'tyrant' features in both the *Acta Alexandrinorum* stories and the *acta Christianorum*:

> The emperor said: 'Now do you not know whom you are speaking to?'
> Appian: 'I know very well. Appian speaks to a tyrant (*tyrannos*).'
> The emperor: 'No, to a king (*basileus*).'[153]

> Theodoretus: 'It is written that the heart of a king (*rex*) who acknowledges God is in the hand of God, but the heart of a tyrant (*tyrannos*) who worships idols is not.'
> Julian said: 'Fool, you speak to an emperor (*imperator*), not a tyrant.'[154]

The emperor is also described as a 'brigand' in both literatures.[155]

The tone of the Christian acts is different from that of the *Acta Alexandrinorum* because the Alexandrian heroes and the Christian martyrs were promoting different virtues. Great emphasis is laid upon the heroic resistance of the Christians who refuse to be swayed by their judges' frequent attempts to tempt them away from their beliefs. Nonetheless, the Christians are as resolute in their convictions as the Alexandrian Greeks, and there are other firm links between the two sets of acts. The most obvious similarity is the form of the trial scenes. Like the Alexandrian acts, the Christian acts *look* like official trial minutes. The stories are told through terse dialogues in the form of direct speech, following the pattern '*A* said . . . *B* said . . .' Some acts, such as the *Acts of the Scillitan martyrs*, the *Acts of Cyprian*, the *Acts of Ignatius*, and the *Passion of St Dioscorus*, adhere rigidly to this form.[156] Nonetheless, despite their form, the stories exhibit many literary traits. In the *Acts of Justin*, for example, the names of the participants are

[148] *Martyrdom of St Carpus, Papylus and Agathonice* 9. [149] *Acts of Apollonius* 9.
[150] *Acts of Tararchus, Probus and Andronicus* 3. [151] E.g. *Martyrdom of St Pionius* 20.
[152] *CPJ* II 158a vii.3–8; *Letter of Phileas* 29–30. [153] *CPJ* II 159b ii.3–6.
[154] *Passion of St Theodoretus* 2. [155] *CPJ* II 159b iv.8; *Acta Achati* 3.
[156] See Musurillo 1972: nos. 6, 16; *P.Oxy.* L 3529 (*Passion of St Dioscorus*) (fourth century AD); see Bisbee 1988: 133–62 on the *Acts of Ignatius.*

suspiciously appropriate, e.g. Charito ('grace') and Euelpistus ('hope'), and their responses to their judges play upon the meanings of their names.[157] The Christian acts focus on the miracles surrounding the trials and the gory descriptions of the eventual martyrdom in their stories. There is a gory torture scene in *CPJ* II 158a, and a miracle occurs in one of the latest versions of an *Acta Alexandrinorum* story – the sweating of the statue of Serapis.[158] It is probable that, if more of the *acta Christianorum* existed in their original form, as the *Acts of Phileas* does, and if there were more of the *Acta Alexandrinorum* texts themselves, more direct parallels could be found.

To conclude, there are stories of Greeks, Romans, Jews and Christians bravely confronting Roman emperors or prefects with considerable similarities in form, content and tone to the *Acta Alexandrinorum* proper. These literatures also exhibit considerable differences. This is unsurprising, given the different agendas behind the promulgation of the literatures, whose heroes promote widely differing types of virtue. The stories that are closest in literary terms to the *Acta Alexandrinorum* are the stories of other Greeks confronting emperors, and some of the Christian martyr acts, particularly the *Acts of Phileas*. These trial literatures were a genuinely popular empire-wide literary form. They were not sophisticated in literary terms and as such appealed to a wide audience. It remains unclear whether these are all just scattered tales with coincidental links, using a story form which offered sufficient flexibility to be adapted to particular times and circumstances, or whether the stories ever crystallised into a clearly definable literary form that we could call 'ancient martyr literature'. The *Acta Alexandrinorum* stories developed in Alexandria as a result of the events of AD 38–41 and it is unlikely that the genre spread from Alexandria to form the basis of these parallel traditions. Ultimately there is not enough firm evidence to prove or disprove literary dependence between any of the stories. The evidence rather suggests that these works were composed in the same literary environment by writers who were familiar with the judicial processes of the Roman government. Rather than one set of stories being dependent on another, they are probably mutually influential, the writers freely borrowing ideas and even phrases from other types of contemporary popular literature.

THE *ACTA ALEXANDRINORUM* IN THE CONTEXT OF THE 'HELLENIC RENAISSANCE'

During the Principate Greek culture enjoyed a renaissance. Following the practice of many Republican generals, Augustus and his successors gathered

[157] *Acts of Justin* 4.2–4. [158] *CPJ* II 157 iii.14 (see p. 95).

in their court many cultured Greeks, who enjoyed imperial patronage, were appointed to the highest posts in the imperial service, entered the Senate, became consuls, and were the generals of Roman armies. It is the general view that this promotion of Hellenic culture gradually eroded the distrust and antipathy between Greeks and Romans, which had emerged in the Hellenistic period in response to Roman imperialism, and heralded an age of Graeco-Roman political and cultural unity, a union about which the Greek orator Aelius Aristides eulogised in his *To Rome*. Rome was therefore a common fatherland, bringing great benefits to its subjects.[159]

However, with the renaissance, Greeks became increasingly more self-conscious of their own culture and heritage and looked back at their glorious past with despair as they reflected on their current status as the subjects of a non-Greek and therefore barbarian race. The Hellenic renaissance has been viewed as a primarily anti-Roman movement.[160] A fictional representative of extreme Hellenism, Proteus Peregrinus, openly advocated rebellion against Rome.[161] Plutarch reveals that Greek nobles could 'stir up the masses by foolishly urging them to imitate the deeds, spirit and actions of their ancestors'.[162] Recent studies have highlighted an undercurrent of Greek hostility, alienation and ambivalence towards Rome in the writings of even those Greeks whose perspective is considered to be loyalist, such as Plutarch, Dio Chrysostom, Aelius Aristides and Philostratus.[163]

The *Acta Alexandrinorum* literature must be seen in the context of this flourishing of Greek culture. The heroes of the Alexandrian stories emphasise their Hellenic heritage. Isidorus proclaims: 'I am . . . a Hellene [by race(?)] . . . an orator!'[164] The major themes of the stories are heavily influenced by Hellenic ideals. The emphasis on the high status of the Alexandrians who are steeped in Greek culture, and on their love of their fatherland, is comparable with the patriotism of the heroes of the Greek novels.[165] Tied into the emphasis on εὐγένεια in the stories is the promotion of the Hellenic habit of outspokenness (παρρησία); the Alexandrians rely on their noble status to protect them, however insolent they are.[166] The *Acta Alexandrinorum* stories are therefore heavily influenced by the Hellenic ideals that were being promoted throughout the renaissance. I will

[159] E.g. Forte 1972.

[160] E.g. MacMullen 1966: 189: 'Rome's internal enemies were . . . Greeks of the upper class, defending the purity of their cultural inheritance'; 244: 'The Second Sophistic [was] perfectly harmless on the surface, but anti-Roman in its implications, since its intent was the reassertion of Hellenism.'

[161] Lucian *De mort. Peregr*. 18, 33. [162] Plut. *Prae. ger. reip*. 814a–c.

[163] Swain 1996; see also Veyne 1999: 510–67. [164] *CPJ* II 156b ii.7–9.

[165] See pp. 166–7; cf. Aristot. *NE* 1169a.

[166] E.g. *CPJ* II 157. For examples of non-Alexandrian Greek παρρησία in the imperial court see pp. 147–51.

examine here the Hellenic sentiments expounded in other contemporary literary productions which were influenced by the renaissance.

DECLAMATIONS

One product of the renaissance was the 'Second Sophistic', a term coined by Philostratus in his *Lives of the Sophists* to denote what was primarily a rhetorical movement.[167] The Sophists were particularly active in producing declamations in this period, fictional legal pleas on mythological, imaginary, or, more usually, historical themes. In delivering historical declamations, the Sophist would impersonate an important figure from Greek history and improvise a speech taking into account the historical situation and the personality and emotion of the character. They also had to imitate the language of the classical period. Their declamations attracted great audiences because they brought the past to life and played on the audience's nostalgic interest in it.[168]

Declamations were particularly popular in Alexandria. A student of the late first century AD excused the fact that he had missed so many lectures, claiming that he could learn as much attending the public declamations in the city.[169] The *Acta Alexandrinorum* stories need to be seen in the context of this climate, where fictional legal pleas were popular and glorified famous Greek historical figures. The writers of these stories composed their own fictional trial scenes, glorifying Alexandria's own heroes and past. This is why, for example, the Alexandrian Appian refers to those Alexandrians who died before him, and lectures an emperor on the city's great past, starting with the story of Caesar and Cleopatra.[170]

THE NOVEL

Another significant area of literary production was the Greek novel, which flourished in the period of *c.* AD 50–250. It is unclear how representative of the genre the surviving Greek novels are. The fragments on papyri imply that the tone, content and range of the Greek novel were much wider than the extant examples would suggest. The extant novels all tell the same essential story of two young Greek aristocratic lovers, who are separated and finally reunited after adventures spread across the Mediterranean. Like the

[167] Although the Sophists were, by no means, the only prominent Greek orators in this period – see Bowie 1982: 29–59; Brunt 1994: 25–52.
[168] Schmitz 1999: 71–92. Cf. Plut. *Prae. ger. reip*. 814a–c.
[169] *P.Oxy*. XVIII 2190, with Rea 1993b: 75–88. [170] *CPJ* VIII 159b v.11–14.

historical declamations, novels were popular and appealing because they were filled with traditional Hellenic cultural ideals. Reading a novel and listening to a declamation about the Greek past were a way for aspiring Hellenes to express their Hellenic culture. Musurillo briefly compared the Greek novels with the *Acta Alexandrinorum*. The similarities he found were that both sets of heroes are passionately patriotic and proud of their high birth (εὐγένεια), and that there is a melodramatic emphasis on a glorious death.[171] To these can be added the frequent use of trial scenes in the novels and the use of a narrator in one of the Alexandrian stories, *CPJ* II 158a.

HELLENIC IDEALS FROM THE RENAISSANCE

There are similarities between the sentiments expressed in the *Acta Alexandrinorum* literature and the published views of Plutarch, Dio Chrysostom, Aelius Aristides and Philostratus.[172] This is somewhat surprising as these writers were members of the wealthy Hellenic elite who benefited enormously from Roman rule. They all ended their lives as Roman citizens, and several were personal acquaintances of emperors. Nonetheless, they criticise the contemporary political environment, urge cities to limit the need for Roman intervention in Greek affairs by promoting concord, portray some Roman emperors negatively, and emphasise that emperors need Greek education and culture to rule effectively. Aristides' oration *To Rome* is often taken to represent the feeling of the educated Greek elite of the period.[173] However, the enthusiastic praise of Rome in this oration may not even be Aristides' own view. The speech, delivered to Antoninus Pius by an ambitious young orator, may instead represent what Aristides felt would please the emperor and consequently ensure his advancement.[174] Commentators have stressed the rhetorical nature of the oration, and noted that it lacks interest in Rome as a city and in Roman history.[175] Aristides' interest and outlook, as his other orations clearly reveal, is wholly in Hellenic things.[176]

Plutarch and Dio Chrysostom reveal their dissatisfaction with the contemporary political climate and with their Roman overlords. Plutarch is particularly blunt about the realities of Roman government in his *Political*

[171] Musurillo 1954: 252–8.
[172] For full details on the lives and works of these writers see Jones 1971a; 1978; Behr 1968; 1981–6; Anderson 1986.
[173] E.g. Oliver 1953: 871–1003. [174] Swain 1996: 275.
[175] E.g. Bowersock 1969: 45, a 'multitude of commonplaces'.
[176] Swain 1996: 254–97. See Stertz 1994: 1248–70.

Advice, where he laments that Greece has now been enslaved. Whereas, in fifth-century Athens, Pericles could say: 'Pericles, you are ruling free men, Greeks, Athenians, fellow citizens', a politician under the empire must say to himself: 'In authority, you are under authority, ruling a state controlled by proconsuls and procurators of Caesar.'[177] Greek politicians must behave with moderation, and not take excessive pride in their citizen's crown, since they can see the boots of Roman soldiers just above their head. If they fail to recognise 'the limits of the authority granted by those in control', they should expect 'the dread chastiser, the axe, the cutter of the neck'.[178] Plutarch also warns politicians that they must even obey Roman magistrates whose behaviour is insulting.[179] Dio Chrysostom likewise criticises the contemporary administration, directing his reproaches towards a symptom of Roman rule, corrupt Roman governors, whom he often speaks about in negative terms.[180]

Plutarch blames the 'enslavement' on Greek factionalism. Factions within cities and provinces were continually referring matters that could be dealt with internally to the Romans, thereby bringing on 'a reproach of slavery'.[181] Plutarch urges the promotion of concord, which would limit Roman intervention in Greek affairs. Internal regulations would ensure that there would be 'no need of outside doctors and medicines'.[182] There is no need, although the leg is tied, to offer the neck. The factions were making the Romans 'masters of more than they themselves want'.[183] Plutarch is well aware that, because of their factionalism, the Greeks were currently not capable of governing themselves:

> Of freedom, our peoples have as much as those in control allow them, and more would perhaps not be better.[184]

Nonetheless, the plea for concord suggests that he envisaged a time when Greece would once again be autonomous, and free of Roman rule. Dio Chrysostom also urges concord between the Greeks for this very reason. He urges the Tarsians not to involve the Romans in a dispute with another city regarding the status of 'first city' of the province because 'leadership and rule are in the hands of others' and the dispute is that 'of fellow slaves quarrelling with each other over reputation and primacy'.[185] He also refers to the Roman peace, the consequence of Roman rule of which the Greeks

[177] Plut. *Prae. ger. reip*. 813e. [178] *Ibid*. 813f. [179] *Ibid*. 816e–817c.
[180] E.g. Dio Chrys. *Or*. 45.4–5, 43.11–12. [181] Plut. *Prae. ger. reip*. 814e.
[182] *Ibid*. 815c. [183] *Ibid*. 814f. [184] *Ibid*. 824c.
[185] Dio Chrys. *Or*. 34.51. Cf. *Or*. 38.36 warning the Nicomedians and Nicaeans that corrupt Roman officials could exploit the factionalism caused by their squabbling to avoid prosecution.

should have been most appreciative, as 'the peace and the slavery, of which all pray for the first, peace, while the other is no longer a sign of baseness'.[186] Similarly, Aristides urges cities to promote concord. He applauds Greek unity against Persia and attributes Philip of Macedon's conquest of Greece to factionalism. With this conquest 'all those great things sank under ground like water'.[187] He is particularly critical of the main source of factionalism between the major cities in Asia, the quest for 'primacy': 'Why are we fighting over a shadow?'[188] These ideas and concepts appear in the *Acta Alexandrinorum* stories. The theme of slavery is important in one story, where Isidorus asserts:

> I am not a slave, but a gymnasiarch of the glorious city of Alexandria![189]

The outcome of the trial, with his ensuing execution, shows that he was indeed a slave, to be disposed of in any way the emperor wanted. The need to promote internal concord and prevent constant Roman intervention in Alexandrian affairs was the historical reason behind the Alexandrians wanting a *boule*. The texts telling the stories of Alexandrians prosecuting Roman prefects depict the Roman administration as corrupt.[190]

The imperial cult and the appropriateness of worshipping a living man were a major issue in the Greek east in this period. An anonymous oration preserved on a papyrus from Oxyrhynchus written in the third century AD is highly critical of the imperial cult.[191] The speaker heavily criticises a Nicaean who has invented rites to be performed to Caesar. He points out that it was a Nicaean who invented these rites, not his own people, which is to their credit. He continues: 'Let the rites be his, and let them be performed among his people alone!' The text breaks off with the speaker alleging that he does not wish to commit sacrilege to Caesar, and suggesting a way of not depriving Caesar of immortality. The editor believed that the speaker was not necessarily wholly opposed to the imperial cult, but objected to new practices introduced into it. However, the mention of Nicaea strongly recalls Dio's statement that the first stage in the development of the imperial cult was the erection of temples to Julius Caesar in Ephesus and Nicaea, which shortly preceded the establishment of temples to Augustus himself at Pergamum and Nicomedia.[192]

This view of the imperial cult is not atypical of contemporary Greek thought. Dio perhaps reflects third-century Greek opinion on it in his speech of Maecenas to Augustus:

[186] Nutton 1978: 210; Dio Chrys. *Or.* 31.125. [187] Ael. Aristid. *Or.* 23.51. [188] *Ibid.* 63.
[189] *CPJ* III 156d ll. 8–11. [190] See pp. 73–9. [191] *P.Oxy.* XIII 1612. [192] Dio 51.20.6–9.

Permit no exceptional or prodigal distinction to be given you . . . Never permit gold or silver images to be made . . . Neither should you permit the raising of a temple to you . . . It is virtue that makes many men like gods and no one was ever elected a god.[193]

Arrian, who composed his history of Alexander in the second century AD, includes a long discourse on prostration, praising the courtier Callisthenes, who disproved of this 'servile behaviour' and stated emphatically that there was a difference between honouring a man and worshipping a god. Arrian's personal comment on the affair shows his own disapproval of the imperial cult:

It is enough I think, once a man has consented to enter a king's service, that he should exalt his masters as much as he can, while at the same time preserving a decent modesty in his own behaviour.[194]

The Alexandrians usually show great respect to the emperors and often go to great lengths to point out that they worship them enthusiastically while their opponents the Jews do not. One suspects, however, that the Alexandrians are being portrayed as diplomatic and polite, which makes their subsequent punishments seem especially unfair. There is perhaps contempt behind Isidorus' reference to Claudius as 'Olympian Caesar'.[195] In another story Appian states:

Who recalls me for a second time from greeting (προσκυνοῦντα) Death and those who have died before me, Theon and Isidorus and Lampon![196]

The choice of phrase is hardly accidental. The implication is that, although Appian considers Death and other Alexandrian heroes worthy of *proskynesis*, the emperor is not.

These 'loyalist' writers also portray some emperors in negative terms. Plutarch is critical of Augustus in the *Parallel Lives*, and portrays Vespasian as cruel and unhappy.[197] Although he depicts Nero as a base tyrant, he had some affection for the emperor who proclaimed at the Isthmus on 28 November AD 67 that Achaea was to be freed from direct rule and tribute.[198] Dio Chrysostom clearly hated Nero, whom he depicts as depraved.[199] Philostratus asserts that, with the exceptions of Augustus and Claudius, all the Julio-Claudian emperors were harsh tyrants who shamed Rome, and, as I

[193] Dio 52.35.3–4.
[194] Arr. *Anab*. 4.9.13. For other Greek attitudes towards the imperial cult see Bowersock 1973: 177–212.
[195] *CPJ* II 156b i.25–6. [196] *CPJ* II 1596 iv. 2–7.
[197] E.g. Plut. *Cic*. 46.1; *Brut*. 27, 46.2; *Ant*. 22.1–2; 53; *Amat*. 771c.
[198] Plut. *De frat. amor*. 488a; *De garr*. 505c; *De sera num. vind*. 567–8. [199] Dio Chrys. *Or*. 21.8–10.

have already noted, portrays Nero and Domitian as tyrants in a similar way to the *Acta Alexandrinorum*. In a dialogue probably written by Philostratus but ascribed to Lucian, Munatius Rufus and Menecrates discuss Nero's attempt to dig a canal through the Isthmus at Corinth in AD 67. The dialogue uses the political vocabulary of fifth century BC Athens and stresses the importance of freedom of speech (*parrhesia*) and freedom (*eleutheria*) and criticises Nero for silencing Greece and denying Greeks freedom of speech.[200]

Plutarch, Dio Chrysostom and Philostratus all assert that Romans need to be educated by the Greeks in the art of kingship. Plutarch's *Discourse to an Unlearned Prince* concerns rulers in general, although it is possible that he delivered the oration to Trajan.[201] Dio Chrysostom composed four orations on kingship, some of which he may have delivered to Trajan. He boasts that he had instructed an emperor on kingship.[202] In these orations, Dio Chrysostom frequently combines flattery with strong criticisms of prospective bad behaviour, which makes it difficult to tell whether the emperor is being praised or urged to improve and amend his behaviour. The ideas that are expressed regarding kingship imply that Dio Chrysostom did not consider Trajan to be an ideal monarch.[203] He states that the Romans need to be instructed in Greek ethics:

> Only then will your city be great and strong, and rule according to truth. For now at any rate its greatness is suspect and not at all safe.[204]

Philostratus only portrays emperors in favourable terms if they had allowed Greeks to lecture them on kingship. He includes an unhistorical debate between the Greeks Dio Chrysostom, Euphrates and Apollonius of Tyana in the presence of Vespasian on kingship. His hero Apollonius also sends Titus to be instructed on kingship by the Greek philosopher Demetrius, when Titus asks the sage how he should rule his empire.[205] The implication of this need for Greek culture and education is that the Romans are, by race, culturally inferior to the Greeks, and need Greek moral guidance for running their empire.

The depiction of emperors in the *Acta Alexandrinorum* stories has already been discussed (p. 91). The stories often portray the emperors as tyrannical and cruel, wholly lacking in nobility and culture (*eugeneia*), the prerequisites of good rulers. Several Alexandrians also instruct emperors on how they should behave. Hermaiscus lectures Trajan on his duties to help 'his own'

[200] Ps.-Lucian, *Nero*; Whitmarsh 2001: 152–5. [201] Jones 1971a: 30. [202] Dio Chrys. *Or.* 57.10–12. [203] Swain 1996: 192–206. [204] Dio Chrys. *Or.* 13.34. [205] Philostr. *VA* 6.31.

(i.e. nobles), rather than Jews.[206] Isidorus also appears to remind Claudius of his duties: 'You must not . . .'[207] Appian's contrast of the qualities of the emperor and his father, and his lecturing an emperor on Alexandrian history, may also have been for instructive purposes.[208]

During the Principate Greeks were looking back at their past with a nostalgic pride and viewing their present subjugation to the Romans as a less worthy age. Except for the Roman peace, applauded by Aristides, other merits of Roman rule are rarely evident in Greek writings. There is little evidence to suggest that any of the writers surveyed here saw themselves as part of a common cultured Graeco-Roman elite. None of these writers show any influence of Roman culture, and, with the exception of Plutarch, any interest in it. Lurking behind all these Greek writers is an ardent Hellenism, and sadness that Greeks were now the subjects of a race of *barbaroi*. The writers hope for concord, which would produce a unified, strong Greece in the future, but realise that for the present the Romans were there to stay. Their writings consequently urge the Roman emperors to adopt Greek culture and education, so that they will be ideal kings on the Greek model, rather than tyrants.

CONCLUSIONS

The *Acta Alexandrinorum* stories have numerous similarities with other contemporary trial literature. The focus of these stories is the heroic 'martyrs', and the accounts consequently play an important role in the formation of the self-identity of the group writing and promulgating them. In light of this and the links between the sentiments expressed in the stories and the works of 'loyalist' Greek writers, one needs to take a much more sophisticated view of the *Acta Alexandrinorum* as 'dissident literature'. The *Acta Alexandrinorum* literature is considered 'anti-Roman' because the Alexandrian heroes criticise emperors and prosecute corrupt Roman prefects. However, the Greek writer Philostratus criticised past emperors with the full support of the Severans. Even Marcus Aurelius is critical of his predecessors. He warns himself:

> Take care not to be 'Caesarised'. Stay simple, good, pure, serious, free from affectation, a friend of justice, a worshipper of the gods, kind, affectionate, strenuous in all proper acts.[209]

[206] *CPJ* II 157 iii.11–13. [207] *CPJ* II 156b ii.11.
[208] E.g. *CPJ* II 159b ii.7–13, v.10–14. [209] M. Aur. *Med.* 6.30.

Suetonius and Tacitus, Romans themselves, have much worse things to say about emperors than the writers of any of the *Acta Alexandrinorum*.

Although the emperors in the *Acta Alexandrinorum* stories are usually caricatured tyrants, the literature is not uniformly hostile to all emperors and prefects. Gaius emerges with much credit in a story where the Alexandrians decisively win their case.[210] The Roman senators who advise Claudius to hear Isidorus' case, and agree that he deserves a day for his hearing, are also portrayed positively.[211] An emperor, perhaps Marcus Aurelius, is eulogised although this praise is intended to emphasise his son's unsuitability to rule.[212] Nowhere in the *Acta Alexandrinorum* literature do we find calls for the overthrow of Rome, or the enslavement of the Romans, as we do, for example, in the Sibylline Oracles (see pp. 120–2). Rather than seeing the *Acta Alexandrinorum* as, in Musurillo's words, 'the most violent of anti-Roman propaganda', they are better seen as a by-product of Hellenistic thought and ideals of the period, and not widely divorced from other contemporary Greek literary productions.[213]

[210] *P.Giss.Lit.* 4.7. [211] *CPJ* II 156a ii.13–15.
[212] *CPJ* II 159b ii.6–13, previously quoted on p. 17. [213] Musurillo 1954: 258.

CHAPTER 6

Conclusion

Musurillo pioneered the view that the *Acta Alexandrinorum* were political in character, the literary expression of a discontented Alexandrian elite, who wrote pamphlets to stir up opposition and anti-Roman feeling in Alexandria, 'campaigning', as it were, for the restoration of the Alexandrian *boule*. Although basing their stories on the official minutes of historical trials in the imperial court, the writers of the *Acta Alexandrinorum* twisted these records for their propagandist purposes, producing a unique literary phenomenon.

Through examining the individual stories and placing the literature into its wider literary context, I have argued for a different interpretation of the *Acta Alexandrinorum*. I began my study by clearly differentiating between the *Acta Alexandrinorum* proper and the literature related to them. I have argued that the *Acta Alexandrinorum* proper and the *Acta* related literature belong to a spectrum of writings about the politics of Alexandria under Roman rule. These writings ranged from 'copied' documents and historical writings to almost novelistic literary compositions. While many pieces of the *Acta* related literature belong nearer the former end of this spectrum, the *Acta Alexandrinorum* proper belong at the latter end. However, as I noted during my review of the texts, many pieces of the *Acta* related literature share common literary themes with the *Acta Alexandrinorum* proper. Indeed, the characterisation of the brave Alexandrian ambassadors who prosecute Roman prefects on behalf of their fatherland is often similar to that of those Alexandrians who face Jewish embassies in the imperial court.

I have emphasised the role of the embassies to Gaius and Claudius in the development of these stories. The embassies spawned a great literature that began in the AD 40s with the historical writings of Philo, Apion and Chaeremon, and continued throughout the next two centuries, as shown by the writings of Josephus and the *Acta Alexandrinorum* proper. Although it is difficult to reconstruct the history of the years AD 38–41, there are evidently serious historical and chronological discrepancies in the stories. They reveal

much about how the people of Roman Egypt reacted to the events of these years, and about what they *wanted* to make their history. The result of this is that the *Acta Alexandrinorum* proper record diverse traditions, reproducing the same essential story line, emphasising the cultural superiority of the Alexandrian Greek heroes, who bravely oppose Alexandrian Jews and tyrannical Roman emperors on behalf of their beloved fatherland. The stories give the impression that the Alexandrian Greeks have a superior case but are nonetheless condemned to death because imperial favour lies with the Alexandrian Jews. The historicity of this alleged imperial favour is difficult to uphold. Whenever serious violence erupted in the city, the Roman prefect always sided with the Alexandrian Greeks against the Jews. The Alexandrian Jewish community suffered terribly in AD 38, 66 and 115–17. While in the *Acta Isidori* Claudius is firmly allied with the Alexandrian Jews, in historical terms this 'alliance' was his refusal to side with the Alexandrian Greeks against the Jews.

The *Acta Alexandrinorum* stories are usually seen as highly charged political pamphlets, written to promote anti-Roman feeling in the city. It is also thought that the anti-Jewish sentiments in the stories are a secondary phenomenon, the Alexandrian Greeks covertly voicing their opposition to Rome by attacking their alleged protégés, the Jews, whose position in Alexandria rested solely upon Roman support. I have argued that the literature is actually not opposed to all things Roman, and observed that the supposed main impetus behind it, the quest for a *boule*, is notably absent from many *Acta Alexandrinorum* proper stories. The literature is equally hostile to Romans, Jews and also Egyptians; that is all non-Greeks. The stories revolve around the Alexandrian Greek heroes, their services to their fatherland, and their spectacular, glorious deaths. Alexandria was not a remote, isolated city that had unique problems with Rome, but very much part of the wider Hellenic Mediterranean world. The Alexandrian Greek heroes of the *Acta Alexandrinorum* stories are very aware of their Hellenic heritage. Indeed, the emphasis in the stories on the differences between the Alexandrian heroes and the non-Greek *barbaroi*, Romans, Jews and Egyptians, who are all 'not of the same nature' as the Alexandrian Greeks, serves as a way of defining Alexandrian Greek identity. The promotion of the glorious city of Alexandria and her heroes is very much the driving force behind the literature. The casting of the Romans and Jews as the judges and accusers of the Alexandrian heroes certainly would not have worked if there were no history of long-standing tension between the Alexandrian Greeks and the Romans and Jews. Nonetheless, the literature hardly promotes further anti-Romanism or anti-Judaisism. There were, after all, many more

direct ways of doing this. As I observed in chapter 4 (pp. 120–4), several pieces of oracular literature do predict and look forward to the destruction and overthrow of the Romans, and call for their readers to 'attack the Jews'.

Nonetheless, it remains the case that the *Acta Alexandrinorum* are, in places, extremely critical and hostile towards certain emperors, who are usually portrayed as stereotypical tyrants in the stories. To what extent, then, can this literature be described as dissident? The answer lies in where the boundaries between the extremes of loyalty and dissidence should be drawn. Unlike oracular literature, there is nothing to suggest that the *Acta Alexandrinorum* literature was ever recognised by the Roman authorities as an expression of dissent and suppressed. As I observed in chapter 4 (pp. 119–20), mimes which were openly and publicly performed in Alexandria covered much the same subject matter as the *Acta Alexandrinorum* proper, and the theatrical elements in the stories may even suggest that the *Acta Alexandrinorum* proper themselves were performed publicly. Philostratus composed the trial scenes in his *Apollonius of Tyana*, which was commissioned by the empress Julia Domna, for the entertainment of the Severan court. This suggests imperial toleration, and indeed support, of a literature similar in tone and content to the *Acta Alexandrinorum* proper, despite the Severans knowing that Philostratus' caricaturing of emperors such as Nero and Domitian as tyrants reflected negatively on the position of the emperor. It should also be noted that emperors often chose to denigrate their predecessors as a way of defining their own regimes. The stories of Isidorus' trial are very critical of the 'deranged' Claudius. However, such insults cannot be considered as expressions of dissent if they were added early in Nero's reign, when Seneca, for instance, wrote the *Apocolocyntosis*, a work far more hostile to Claudius, to amuse Nero's court.

While the modern title *Acta Alexandrinorum* ('the trial minutes of the Alexandrians') presupposes an official documentary basis to the literature, I have argued that none of the *Acta Alexandrinorum* proper, and only few pieces of the *Acta* related literature, are documents. Yet they cannot easily be dismissed as fiction either. I have demonstrated that there was not a fixed, rigid boundary between ancient documents and literary texts, and that the *Acta Alexandrinorum* proper, and many pieces of the *Acta* related literature, belong to the grey area between the extremes of 'documents' and 'literature'. I have argued that the only minutes that could possibly lie behind the *Acta Alexandrinorum* proper and related literature are the reports filed in the archives in Alexandria by ambassadors who returned to the city. Yet, in rewriting, fictionalising and rehydrating the reports that they found

in the Alexandrian archives, the writers of the *Acta Alexandrinorum* were not treating their documents any differently than other ancient writers, such as Josephus or Tacitus, treated their documentary sources.

I have demonstrated that the *Acta Alexandrinorum* were part of a much wider literary phenomenon than has previously been supposed, rather than a unique literary form, born out of the unique political problems between Rome and Alexandria. Although the question of whether the *Acta Alexandrinorum* were part of a clearly definable genre of ancient martyr literature remains to be answered, Romans, Greeks, Jews and Christians all produced mutually influential literary works similar in form, tone and content to the *Acta Alexandrinorum* proper during the Principate. It is also likely that other cities in the Greek east of the empire, such as Antioch, developed their own similar literatures. I have also argued that many of the themes and sentiments running through the *Acta Alexandrinorum* are far from unique, and can also be found in the works of other contemporary writers, including those who are usually considered to be 'loyalist'.

I have argued that the *Acta Alexandrinorum* proper and *Acta* related literature, like the similar literatures produced elsewhere in the empire, were truly popular and had a readership that covered a wide social spectrum in Roman Egypt. The stories of Alexandrian nobles confronting Roman emperors in the imperial court were not exclusively for an Alexandrian clique, but also for men such as Nemesion of Philadelphia and Socrates of Karanis. These men were enjoying the stories partly because they saw themselves as Hellenic by culture. It was through such activities as reading the *Acta Alexandrinorum*, a literature that focused heavily on defining a Hellenic identity, that these men exhibited their own cultural identity, and maintained their positions of pre-eminence in their village societies. But they were also reading the stories because they were entertaining. I have concluded that it was not because of Rome's political 'concessions' to Alexandria in the Severan period that the *Acta Alexandrinorum* literature waned in popularity in the third century AD. The decline was caused by the changing status of Alexandria within the province of Egypt, and the diminishing importance and relevance of 'the city' to the lives of men such as Nemesion and Socrates. The *Constitutio Antoniniana* and the 'third-century crisis' must also have contributed to the end of the literature. The stories, which are built around the premise of a stable, ordered society ruled by the Romans, seem very out of place in a world where all Greeks had become Roman citizens and in a period when there was a genuine, well-founded fear that the Roman empire would be overthrown. Egypt, after all, spent a few years of the third century under Palmyrene rule.

Since Wilcken identified the first examples of this literary phenomenon over a century ago, it has been known variously as the *Acts of the Pagan Martyrs*, the *Acts of the Alexandrian Martyrs* and the *Acta Alexandrinorum*. All of these designations carry misleading connotations. The first two conjure up notions of religious conflicts, and the third that the texts actually are *acta*, that is, verbatim copies of the official minutes taken during the trials themselves. While I have referred to them by their most commonly known designation, the *Acta Alexandrinorum*, a more accurate reflection of what the texts actually are could be given by calling them the *Alexandrian Stories*.

APPENDIX I

Editions of the Acta Alexandrinorum *and related texts*

The texts are listed in the order followed by the *BL* rather than the *Checklist*, as the *Checklist* lists corpora (e.g. *CPJ*) separately. I have listed the measurements of the papyrus, the style of writing and other peculiarities of the text, the date, the provenance, details of other editions and of plates or photographs. I have chosen to designate the texts by either their most comprehensive or most recent papyrological edition. I have only included *BL* references that offer new readings or textual suggestions to the designated edition. The texts are dated by the style of their handwriting, as given by the editors. I have listed separate fragments that form part of the same text under the same entry.

P.ABERD. 117

The papyrus is 2 × 2.8 cm and 6.7 × 2.9 cm and is written in a 'calligraphic hand' according to the *editio princeps*.

Date: First century AD.

Provenance: Unknown.

Text: Published in 1939 as *P.Aberd.* 117. Pack^2 2784.

Plate: *P.Aberd.* plate 3.

ACTA XX

The papyrus is 4.8 × 4.5 cm. It is written in a round, oval, semi-literary hand on the verso of an early second-century document. Only six lines from the middle of a column of writing are preserved.

Date: Late second century AD.

Provenance: Unknown, but the editors of *P.Harr.* II state that most of the papyri from the Rendel Harris collection come from Oxyrhynchus.

Text: Musurillo published the fragment as *APM* and *Acta* XX, designating the text as *P. Rendel Harris* ined. (a) (no inventory number given). Pack^2 2240.

ACTA XXI

The papyrus is 8 × 2.6 cm. It is written on the recto in an oval, upright, semi-literary hand. The text on the verso remains unidentified. Only a thin strip from the middle of a column of writing is preserved, broken off on all sides.

Date: Late second century AD.

Provenance: Unknown, but the editors of *P.Harr.* II state that most of the papyri from the Rendel Harris collection come from Oxyrhynchus.

Text: Musurillo published the fragment as *APM* and *Acta* XXI, designating the text as *P.Rendel Harris* ined. (b) (no inventory number given). Pack² 2241.

ACTA XXII

The papyrus consists of three large fragments (I-III) measuring 13.9 × 14.7, 14.4 × 10.9, 7.7 × 5.5 cm respectively, and twelve smaller fragments (a–l). These smaller fragments measure: a – 1.1 ×3.9 cm; b – 1.7 × 6.6 cm; c – 2 × 3.2 cm; d – 1.8 × 8 cm; e – 1.9 × 3.2 cm; f – 1.2 × 2.1 cm; g – 1.2 × 1.7 cm; h – 0.6 × 1.8 cm; i – 1.2 × 2.6 cm; j – 1.2 × 2.1 cm; k – 1.1 × 1.6 cm; l – 2.6 × 6.9 cm. The text is very poorly preserved. Frr. I and II are both broken off on the left and right sides and probably also at the bottom. Fr. III is broken off on the left and right sides and at the top. The smaller fragments are all broken off on all sides except fr. c, which is complete at the right, and fr. l, which is complete at the bottom. The text is written on the recto in a small, upright, round hand. The verso (unpublished) was later used for accounts in the early third century. Van Minnen 1994: 244 revealed that it was excavated from house B17 at Karanis, the home of a local tax collector named Socrates (see pp. 112–19 above). The text is from the Michigan Collection.

Date: Early second century AD, probably the reign of Hadrian or slightly later.

Provenance: Karanis.

Text: Musurillo published the text in Musurillo 1957: 185–90 and as *Acta* XXII, designating it as *P.Mich.* inv. 4800. Pack² 2242. From the digital image published on the World Wide Web, it would appear that fragments c and d have now been assigned to fr: I, col. i on the basis of fibre realignment.

Plates: A series of digital images of the recto and verso of the text are published on the World Wide Web as part of the APIS project at: http://www.lib.umich.edu/pap/ under the APIS item no. *P.Mich.* inv. 4800.

P.AMST. I 27

The papyrus is 6.5 × 6.7 cm. It is written on the recto of a reused papyrus, which shows traces of a text that has been washed off. The hand is described as not very accomplished.

Date: April AD 175.

Provenance: Unknown.

Text: Published in Sijpesteijn 1971: 186–92 as *P.Amsterdam* inv. 22; *SB* XII 10991; *P.Amst.* I 27.

Plates: *ZPE* 8 (1971) plate 2. *P.Amst.* plate 14.

BGU II 588

The papyrus is 7 × 8.5 cm. It is broken off on the top and left side.

Date: Late second century AD.

Provenance: Fayum.

Text: Published in 1898 as *BGU* II 588 (*P.Berol.* inv. 7362). Republished in Wilcken 1909: 825–6, and as *APM* and *Acta* XII. Pack² 2233.

BGU II 646

The papyrus is 16.5 × 10 cm. The writing is described as unpractised and cursive.

Date: Late second–early third century AD (after 6 March AD 193).

Provenance: Fayum.

Text: Published as *BGU* II 646. Republished as *W.Chr.* 490. Vandoni 1964: no. 3.

BKT IX 64

The papyrus is 22.5 × 26.3 cm. There are the remains of two complete columns of writing, but the text is badly damaged and abraded. It is written on the verso. The recto contains the remains of an unpublished document. The hand is described as similar to *P.Giss.* I 40.

Date: Late second century AD.

Provenance: Fayum.

Text: A transcript of the text (*P.Berol.* inv. 21161*v*) was published in 1996 as *BKT* IX 64. The papyrus is badly abraded, and, on the basis of the plate, some of the letters appear to have been misread. The reading σερ̣ω̣νων in i.15 is doubtful. From the plate σε̣[.]ων̣ με̣ν or σε̣[.]ω ἡμε̣ῖν would appear

possible. Both ἀνατ[ρέ]ψον and ἀναπ[έμ]ψον are possible at i.18. The latter could convey the meaning of sending an embassy to the emperor. The damage to the text is such that even a thorough re-edition would not significantly improve it.

Plate: *BKT* IX plate 32.

BKT IX 115

The papyrus is 8.9 × 7.9 cm. It preserves the remnants of the upper portions of two columns. It is written on the recto in a fluid hand, sloping slightly to the right. The verso contains an unpublished document.

Date: Late second–early third century AD.

Provenance: Fayum.

Text: A transcript of the text (*P.Berol.* inv. 21211*r*) was published in 1996 as *BKT* IX 115.

Plate: *BKT* IX plate 53.

BKT IX 177 RECTO AND VERSO

The papyrus is 5.1 × 4.2 cm. The editor suggests that the text comes from a codex but there are no signs of a binding, and it seems that the text is just written on both sides of the papyrus. It is written in a neat hand, described as being similar to *P.Köln* III 127.

Date: Third century AD.

Provenance: Fayum.

Text: A transcript of the text (*P.Berol.* inv. 21273) was published in 1996 as *BKT* IX 177.

Plate: *BKT* IX plate 74.

P.BON. 15

The papyrus is 6.8 × 22 cm. It is written on the verso and broken off at the sides and the bottom. The recto (*P.Bon.* 14) contains a letter dated AD 104–5. The writing is in well-formed and regular uncials.

Date: Third century AD.

Provenance: Unknown.

Text: Published in 1953 as *P.Bon.* 15. Republished as *GC* 270. The *editio princeps* restored the imperial titulature of ll. 1–2 as:

[The emperor Caesar Marcus Aurelius Anto]ninus Pius, Ara[bicus, Adiabenicus, Britannicus,]

[Parthicus Maximus, Felix Augustus, son of the divine Caesar] Lucius Septimius S[everus Pertinax].

The edition of *GC* (*BL* 9.38) restored:

[The emperor Caesar Marcus Aurelius Anto]ninus Pius Ara[bicus Adiabenicus Parthicus Maximus Britannicus]
[Maximus Germanicus Augustus says: 'The divine] Lucius Septimus S[everus Pius my father . . .].

There is an interlinear correction between ll. 1 and 2, which the *editio princeps* read as [. . .]αω μηνὶ κη . . . . . However, Shelton 1980: 179–82 (*BL* 8.65) has reread the interlinear correction as Ἀδιαβηνικὸς Μέγιστος. While this secures the presence of the title Adiabenicus Maximus in the titulature as a whole, it shows that the restorations of both the *editio princeps* and *GC* are incorrect.

P.BOUR. 7

The papyrus is 13.5 × 10 cm. It is written on the verso of a second-century office record in a small, oval semi-cursive hand. The recto has been published as *P.Bour.* 47.

Date: Late second–early third century AD.

Provenance: Unknown.

Text: Published in 1927 as *P.Bour.* 7 (inv. 10). Republished as *APM* and *Acta* XVI. Pack² 2237.

P.BUB. I 4 XXIX

P. Bub. I 4 xxix forms part of a composite roll of thirty-nine columns, made from pasting together a series of separate, and mostly administrative, documents. The roll belongs to the papers of the *strategos* of the Bubastite nome, and the documents range in date from between 29 August AD 220 and 28 August AD 221. The text is written in Latin in a cursive hand.

Date: AD 220–1.

Provenance: Bubastos.

Text: Published in 1990 as *P.Bub.* I 4 xxix. I have used the revised text published in Rea 1993a: 127–33 (*BL* 10.32).

Plate: *P.Bub.* I plate 19.

CH.L.A. IV 268

The papyrus consists of nine small fragments which have been combined to form four main fragments, measuring 10.5 × 9.5, 14.5 × 11.5, 14.5 × 4.5, and 11.5 × 5 cm. The text is written in Latin on the verso. The recto contains accounts in Greek. It is not clear whether the four fragments belong to the same column. Fr. I has an upper margin, and probably preserves the top-left hand side of the column. Fr. II has a margin on the right hand side. Fr. III has a lower margin, and could join onto the bottom of fr. I, as in the *editio princeps* .

Date: Late second–early third century AD.

Provenance: Fayum.

Text: The text was acquired in the nineteenth century and sold to the Bodleian Library, Oxford in 1896. Published in 1967 as *Ch.L.A.* IV 268. I have followed the revised text published in Talbert 1988: 137–47.

Plates: *Ch.L.A.* IV p. 88 has a clear facsimile of the text. *ZPE* 71 (1988) plates 8–9.

CPJ II 150

The papyrus is 16.5 × 22.7 cm. The text preserves one column of writing and traces of a previous column and is written in a narrow, upright semi-cursive hand. There is a join between the two columns, where two sheets of papyrus were glued together. The writing on the first column is on the recto, while the writing on the final column is on the verso. The recto of this final column is occupied by accounts.

Date: First half of the first century AD.

Provenance: Unknown.

Text: Published in Norsa and Vitelli 1930: 9–12. Republished as *SB* IV 7448; *PSI* X 1160; *APM* and *Acta* I; *CPJ* II 150. Pack^2 2215. The text is also listed as *Pap. Flor*. XXX 113.

The edition of *PSI* X 1160 offers a plausible restoration of ii.16–20, which perhaps captures the gist of the original text:

ἀξιοῦμ[εν οὖν ἐξεῖναι]
τὴν βουλὴν κατ'ἐνιαυτὸν γείν[εσθα]ι καὶ με[τὰ τὸν ἐνιαυτὸν]
εὐθύνας διδόναι τῶν διαπεπρᾳ[γμένων. πάντων δὲ τούτων]
τὸν γραμματέα τῆς βουλῆς καλὸν [ἐπιμελεῖσθαι, ὅπως κατὰ τὸν]
προσοριζόμενον χρόνον ἕ[καστα γίνηται. ζημίας δὲ ἐπι-]
διδομένης τὸν χρόνον τοῦτο[ν τηρήσουσι, καὶ εἰ νῦν ἀμέλεια]
γείνεται τῶν νόμων, δέσπο[τα αὐτοκράτωρ].

We [therefore] ask [that it be permitted] for the council to convene annually, and at the end [of each year] to submit a report of [all] its transactions, and [to ensure] that the secretary of the council is serving a good purpose, [in order that all things happen] at the appointed time, [and that it (*i.e.*, the *boule*) might watch out for the penalties] to be given at this time, [and watch out for anything] that happens [contrary] to the laws, o master [emperor].

Col. ii.22–3 has caused much speculation. All that can be read from the papyrus is:

Caesar said: [. . . *vacat(?)* . . .]
I will come to a decision about these matters [. . . *roughly twenty letters missing* . . .] to Alexandri[a . . . *roughly twenty letters missing* . . .].

Norsa and Vitelli 1930: 9–12 suggested: περὶ τούτων διαλήμψο[μαι ἐπειδὰν πρῶτον] | εἰς Ἀλεξάνδρε[ιαν ἐπανέλθω.] Musurillo 1954: 92 (*BL* 3.228) suggested: περὶ τούτων διαλήμψο[μαι καὶ ἀπόκριμα πέμψω] | εἰς Ἀλεξάνδρε[ιαν]. *BL* 6.185 lists a suggestion by Amusin: περὶ τούτων διαλήμψο[μαι καὶ τῷ ἐπιτόπῳ] | εἰς Ἀλεξάνδρε[ιαν γράψω ἵνα]. The text must refer to someone or something going to Alexandria. If it does not refer to the emperor himself going to Alexandria, it may refer to the emperor sending a letter or a prefect to the city.

As noted in Swarney 1970: 60–1, ll. 4–6 should be translated: 'If anyone be unreasonably burdened by taxes exacted by the Idioslogos, or any tax agent who may be oppressing the people . . .' rather than '. . . or by any *other* tax agent . . .'

Plates: Facsimile in *BSAA* 25 (n.s. VII) 1930. Montevecchi 1973: plate 30. *Pap.Flor*. XXX plate 102.

CPJ II 153

The papyrus is 29 × 116.5 cm. It is carelessly written on the verso of a tax register. There is a list of names inserted the wrong way up between the second and third columns. Hanson 1984: 1108 reveals that it belongs to the archive of a local tax collector, Nemesion.

Date: Mid-first century AD.

Provenance: Philadelphia.

Text: Published by Bell in 1924 as *P.Lond*. VI 1912 (inv. 2248). It has been republished and commented on many times since then (see *CPJ* II pp. 36–7 for full bibliography). Other editions include Charlesworth 1939: 1 and 2; *Sel.Pap*. II 212; *CPJ* II 153; Smallwood 1967: no. 370; Jones and Milns 1984:

79; Braund 1985: no. 571; Levick 1985: no. 120; White 1986: no. 88; Sherk 1988: no. 44; *GC* 19; Pestman 1990: 1; Pestman 1994: 16.

Since the edition of *CPJ* II 153, several suggestions have been made for the garbled words in ll. 80 and 92. It has been suggested that the unknown Greek word read as αὐθάδιον in l. 80 in the *editio princeps* is either αὐθαδείαν: 'If you do not stop this *stubborn* enmity' (*BL* 3.199), or αὐθημον (= αὐθημ<ερ>όν): 'If you do not *immediately* stop this enmity' in *GC* 19 (*BL* 9.148).

The *editio princeps* read l. 92 as ἐπισπαίρ̣ειν, noting that 'the reading is not quite certain'. This verb is extremely rare, attested only once, in Plutarch *De Alex. Fort.* 1.3, with the meaning 'to palpitate, to be in alarm'. Amusin (*BL* 4.46) followed by Kasher (*BL* 8.194–5) accepted this reading and gave the verb the sense 'to harass', and suggested the Jews were causing crowd disturbances in the Alexandrian gymnasium.[1] *GC* (*BL* 9.148) suggests that the original reading ἐπισπαίρ̣ειν should be interpreted as ἐπεισπερειν (= ἐπεισέρπειν), which would give the sense 'to enter unlawfully in addition', 'to intrude'. Most scholars, however, have adopted the reading ἐπισπαι̣ειν (= ἐπεισπαίειν) 'to intrude'. The most plausible sense of this verb is 'to struggle in', i.e. 'take part in'.[2] Gruen 2002: 80 suggests that the meaning is 'pour into'.

Lukaszewicz 1998: 71–7 suggests that lines 103–4 could be translated: 'And I on my side will do my utmost for the city as if it belongs to me as a kind of heritage of the house of my ancestors.'

The tax register on the recto (designated *PBL* inv. 2248) is discussed in Hanson 1981: 345–55. Ll. 34–53 are published in Hanson 1984: 1114.

Plates: Hanson 1984: 1109 has a photograph of the first column. Bell 1924: plate 1, Jones and Milns 1984: 121 and Modrzejewski 1995: 148 have photographs of the last column.

CPJ II 154

The papyrus is 25 × 14.1 cm. Only a section of the middle of three columns is reasonably well preserved. There are also several smaller detached pieces. The text is written on the verso of second-century accounts in a narrow, upright semi-literary hand. The text is now housed at the Bodleian Library, Oxford.

Date: Early third century AD.

Provenance: Oxyrhynchus.

[1] Kasher 1985: 314–21. [2] Harris 1976: 92.

Text: Published in 1911 as *P.Oxy.* VIII 1089. Republished as von Premerstein 1923: 4–14; *APM* and *Acta* II; *CPJ* II 154; Hennig 1974: 425–6. Pack² 2217.

The readings δ' ἐχ[ό]μεν̣[ο]ς in l. 32 and δ[έ]σπ̣[οτ]α̣ in l. 33 are highly doubtful, as the editors note.[3] The most likely reading for the former would be δευ̣[ό]μεν̣[ο]ς (= δεόμενος) ('The old man threw himself to his knees, imploring Dionysius, saying . . .').[4] It has been suggested that 'wretched' Dionysius (δ[ύ]στ̣[ην]ἐ̣) is a good alternative for 'Lord' Dionysius.[5] Kerkeslager 2005: 63 suggests alternatively δ[υ]σά̣[θλι]ἐ̣ ('most miserable') or δ[υ]στ̣[υχ]ἐ̣ ('ill-fated'). Hennig 1974: 425–6 makes plausible suggestions for ll. 39 and 47. At l. 39 he suggests εὐθετ̣ίσ[ω] 'I will arrange it', rather than εὐθετ̣<ε>ῖς 'you counsel well', a reading previously suggested in Musurillo 1954: 101. At l. 47 he suggests [ὀ]μ̣[νύ]ω 'I swear', a reading previously suggested in von Premerstein 1923: 9.

The reading of ll. 37–8 is controversial. This section is transcribed as η σου πορευθεντος η̣. .ε.α̣τ̣ρ̣. .φ.μεν. Musurillo 1954: 6 notes a suggestion by Roberts: ἦ σοῦ πο̣ρευθέντος θ̣ᾷ̣τ̣ε[ρ]α π̣ρ̣ο̣δ̣ί̣δ̣ο̣μεν. Koenen 1968b: 254–5 has suggested ἦ σοῦ πορευθέντος ἡ̣[μεῖς] ἀ̣τ̣ρ̣ο̣φ̣ῶ̣μεν. Von Premerstein suggested τ̣ί̣ σοῦ πορευθέντος ἡ̣[μῖς π]α̣τ̣ρ̣[άσι] φ̣[α]μέν or φ̣[ῶ]μέν. The *editio princeps* interpreted the sense as 'what do we gain(?) by your journey?' *CPJ* II p. 64 notes that [π]α̣τ̣ρ̣[ίδι] would be an attractive supplement. However, beyond mentioning 'your journey' and possibly 'the fatherland', the meaning of the sentence is unclear.

Kerkeslager 2005: 63 plausibly suggests that ll. 46–7 should read as an oath formula 'by the Lord Serapis' rather than Serapis being directly addressed.

CPJ II 156A AND 156D

CPJ II 156a is 19 × 14.5 cm and preserves the line-endings of one column and the line-beginnings of a second. *CPJ* II 156d is 19.3 × 10.6 cm and preserves seventeen continuous lines of a column. Wilcken 1896: 1618 established that the texts are part of the same roll. An unknown number of columns are missing between the two fragments. The text is written on the verso of second-century AD accounts in a good-sized semi-uncial hand. *CPJ* II 156a was stored in Berlin before being lost during World War II. *CPJ* II 156d is stored in Cairo, Egypt.

Date: Late second–early third century AD.

Provenance: Unknown.

[3] *CPJ* II p. 63. [4] Koenen 1968b: 254–5. [5] Schwartz 1955: 152; Koenen 1968b: 254–5.

Text: *CPJ* II 156a was first published in Wilcken 1895: 486–7; then in 1898 as *BGU* II 511 (*P.Berol.* inv. 7118). *CPJ* II 156d was first published in Reinach 1895: 161–78, and listed as *P.Cair.Cat.* 10448 in 1903. The combined text was published in Wilcken 1909: 801–2; *W.Chr.* 14, von Premerstein 1923: 23–4; *APM* and *Acta* IVa.i-iii; *CPJ* II 156a and 156d; Smallwood 1967: no. 436; Jones and Milns 1984: no. 93; Braund 1985: no. 575; Sherk 1988: no. 45. Pack² 2219.

CPJ II 156a col. ii is restored on the basis of a similar recension of the same text (*CPJ* II 156b). Von Premerstein 1923: 23–4 completely restored col. i, but his supplements have not been adopted by later editors. Sijpesteijn 1982b: 98 n. 7 (*BL* 8.95–6) suggested that Claudius' best attested titulature should be restored in i.19–20: '[Year one(?) of Tiberius Claudius Caes]ar Augustus | [Germanicus emperor]'. The supplement is slightly long, but Sijpesteijn overcomes this by reverting to Wilcken's longer supplements for i.17–18 (1909: 801–2). The *CPJ*'s supplement of [Augustus] in ii.2 is unlikely, and makes the line overly long.

Musurillo 1954: 20 has plausibly suggested for *CPJ* II 156d l. 1 [ἐμ]ὲ πρέσβεα [ἐχειροτόνησεν] ἡ πατρίς – '[Isidorus]: "[My] city [has chosen me as] ambassador." ' Musurillo suggested at ll. 12–13 καὶ ἀπ̣ω̣λ̣είας ἐπ̣[ικρ]α̣τή̣[σε]ως ('Hence, (I say), alas for the perdition of rule!').

Plate: Bell 1926: plate 2 (*CPJ* II 156a only).

CPJ II 156B

The papyrus is 18 × 12 cm. It is written on the verso of a second-century account in a narrow, sloping, irregular semi-cursive. The text preserves the line-endings of one column and the line-beginnings of a second.

Date: Late second–early third century AD.

Provenance: Purchased at a market at Akhmin (Panopolis), which is considered to be its place of origin.

Text: Published in Bell 1932a: 5–16 (*P.Lond.* inv. 2785). Republished as *APM* and *Acta* IVb; *CPJ* II 156b; Smallwood 1967: no. 436; Braund 1985: no. 575; Sherk 1988: no. 45. Pack² 2221. The text of the first column can be restored on the basis of *CPJ* II 156a. Musurillo 1954: 137 suggests for ii.8–12 (Isidorus speaking):

'I am brought here(?), a gym[nasiarch of Alexandria], 56 years old, a Hellene [by race.' And then the] orator [tore off] his cloak with his right hand [and] threw [himself to the ground].

Musurillo argues that 'the orator' is a spokesman for Isidorus. However, I think that we have a scene similar to one from *CPJ* II 159 where Isidorus describes himself as an orator, tears off his cloak, and demands to be led away in his gymnasiarchal robes, as Appian does in the same document. In a later passage (ii.46–7) Isidorus is 'being led away to death in the robes [of a gymnasiarch]'. ἐπάγομαι may be a corruption of ἀπάγομαι ('I am led away to death'), a word that frequently appears in this literature.

Plate: *APF* 10 (1932) plate 1.

CPJ II 156c

The papyrus is 11.5 × 11 cm. It is written on the verso of a second-century account in carefully produced book uncials. The name of each speaker stands on a separate line above each speech.

Date: Late second–early third century AD.

Provenance: Unknown.

Text: Published in Uxkull-Gyllenband 1930: 604–79 (*P.Berol.* inv. 8877). Subsequent editions include Neppi Modona 1932: 17–24; *APM* and *Acta* IVc; *CPJ* II 156c; Smallwood 1967: no. 436; Braund 1985: no. 575; Sherk 1988: no. 45. Pack² 2220.

CPJ II 157

The papyrus is 15.8 × 53.9 cm. Four consecutive columns are preserved, written on the verso of a copy of a second-century lease from the Antonine period. The bottom margin is preserved, but the tops of columns are lost. The first column was probably the first of the roll. There are also four smaller unplaced fragments. The text is written in a round, upright semi-cursive book-hand.

Date: Late second–early third century AD.

Provenance: Oxyrhynchus.

Text: Published in 1914 as *P.Oxy.* X 1242. Listed as *P.Lond.Lit.* 117 (inv. 2436) and republished as *APM* and *Acta* VIII; *CPJ* II 157; Smallwood 1966: no. 516; Jones and Milns 1984: no. 103. Pack² 2227.

West 1971: 164 suggests that the author has muddled the verb ἀπαντάω 'to go to meet' with ἀνταspάζομαι 'to receive kindly' (ii.16–17). The text would consequently read ἀντησ<πάσ>ατο instead of the ἀπηντήσατο of the papyrus, and the passage would translate: 'However, he [Trajan] did not receive them [the Alexandrian ambassadors] kindly.'

CPJ II 158A RECTO AND VERSO

The papyri published as *CPJ* II 158a are from collections stored in Paris and London. The Paris fragments measure 18.2 × 10.3 and 20.7 × 15.2 cm and combine to form six columns, three consecutive columns on both the recto and the verso (*CPJ* II 158a cols. i–iii, vi–viii). The London fragment measures 11 × 5.5 cm and adds two further columns, one on the recto and one on the verso (*CPJ* II 158a cols. iv–v). Wilcken established that the papyri originally came from the same papyrus roll in 1892. The text is written in a sprawling semi-cursive that at times imitates book-hand.

Date: Early second century AD.

Provenance: Unknown.

Text: The Paris fragments were published in 1865 as *P.Par*. 68. The London fragment was acquired by the British Museum in 1821, and published as *P.Forshall* 43; *P.Lond*. I (p. 229) 1; *P.Lond.Lit*. 118. The Paris and London fragments are published as a combined text in Wilcken 1892: 465–80; Wilcken 1909: 807–21 (assisted by the ideas in Reinach 1893: 70–82); von Premerstein 1922: 266–316; *APM* and *Acta* IX; *CPJ* II 158a; Smallwood 1966: no. 517 (only the Paris fragments). Pack² 2228.

The content suggests that the recto tells the preliminary stages of the trial and the text on the verso the latter stages. However, the Paris and London fragments do not follow on directly from one another, and it is not clear if the Paris fragment precedes or follows the London fragment. The two possible combinations are:

Paris recto (cols. i–iii)[6] [lacuna] London recto (col. iv) [lacuna] London verso (col. v) [lacuna] Paris verso (cols. vi–viii).

London recto (col. iv) [lacuna] Paris recto (cols. i–iii) [lacuna] Paris verso (cols. vi–viii) [lacuna] London verso (col. v).

Von Premerstein and Musurillo adopt the latter scheme. However, on the basis of the subject matter of the columns, I have followed Wilcken and the editors of *CPJ* in adopting the former scheme.

The fragmentary nature of the text has prompted much speculation. Schwartz 1984a: 130–2 argues that it tells three separate stories. On the basis of two repeated phrases from col. i (Paris recto) and col. iv (London recto), he argues that col. iv is a separate recension of col. i. The repetitive phrases are:

[6] The columns are designated by the numbers assigned in *CPJ* II 158a.

Θέω[ν] | τ̣περὶ τούτ[ο]υ̣ διάτα^{γμα} ἀνέγνω[ν] [τοῦ] | Λ̣ούπου
Θέων ἀνέγν̣[ω] | [τὸν ὑπομνηματι]σ̣μὸν Λούπου

τὸν ἀπὸ | [σ]κηνῆς καὶ ἐκ μίμου βασιλέα
περὶ τοῦ ἀπο σκηνῆς | [καὶ ἐκ μίμου βασιλέω]ς.[7]

However, these are not direct repetitions and the content of each column is different. Other examples of the *Acta Alexandrinorum* also contain repetitive phrases.[8] Schwartz's argument for the text on the verso being a separate story is weak and is based solely upon his observation that the prominent ambassadors on the recto are Theon and Paulus, and Antoninus on the verso. However, Paulus appears prominently on both the recto and verso, and Antoninus could appear in one of the many lacunae on the recto. I have therefore treated the text as a single story, as the fact that it was written onto the same roll of papyrus would suggest.

There has been much speculation on the text since the edition of *CPJ*. Based upon a photograph of the Paris fragment, the editor of *P.Oxy.* LV read the first fourteen lines of col. i as:

[Πα]ῦλος περὶ τοῦ βασιλέως ἐν[εδείξα-]
το ὡς προήγαγον καὶ ἔτος α̣ [ἐκεῖ-]
[ν]ο ἀνηγ[όρ]ε̣υσε, καὶ Θέω[ν τὸ]
τ̣περὶ τούτ[ο]υ̣ διάτα^{γμα} ἀνέγνω [τοῦ]
Λ̣ούπου, ὡς προάγειν αὐ[τ]οὺς
[ἐ]κέλευε, χλευάζων τὸν ἀπὸ
[σ]κηνῆς καὶ ἐκ μίμου βασιλέα.
[ο]ὗτος ἡμων, καὶ ὁ αὐτοκράτωρ
[ἐ]σχε<ν>δίασεν εἰπὼν πρὸ̣ς
[Π]αῦλον καὶ τοὺς ἡμετέρους,
[τ]α̣ῦτα ἐν ταῖς τ[ο]ιαύταις π̣α̣-
[ρα]τάξεσ[ι] γείνεται, ἐμοῦ δ̣ὴ
[καὶ] ἐν τ̣ῷ̣ι Δακικῷ̣ι πολέμ[ω]ι
[ὄ]ν̣τος [ἐ]θ<ρ>ύλει τις τῶν π̣ε̣.

His translation of this section is based on his theory that 'the king' refers to the emperor, which I have not adopted in this book. The reading and interpretation of ἔτος α̣ as 'year one' of a king being proclaimed is plausible. The previous interpretation of this line was that ἐτοσά̣[σαντ]ο was a corruption of ἐτωθάσαντο from the verb τωθάζω 'to mock'. The editor translates Hadrian's speech in ll. 11–14 as the emperor reminiscing from his recent war: 'These things happen in such confrontations. For instance, when I myself was in the Dacian war, one of the . . . began to make trouble . . .' The emperor reminiscing in this way would be very bizarre. From

[7] *CPJ* II 158a i.3–5 and iv.2–3; i.6–7 and iv.11–12. [8] E.g. *CPJ* II 156a ii.16–18 and 156d 3–4.

the reference to 'the sixty men' later in the column Hadrian may actually be referring to violence that happened in Alexandria while he was in Dacia.

Schwartz 1984a: 130–2 (*BL* 8.96) restores ii.22–30 based on the third-century recension of the story, *CPJ* II 158b. He restores:

22 [Παῦλος · αὐτοκράτωρ, Ἀλε]ξανδρεῖς
[οὐκ] τοῖς
[πολλοὶ κατα]κριθέν-
25 [τες ἦσαν ἑξήκοντα Ἀλεξα]νδρεῖς
[καὶ οἱ τούτων δοῦλοι, καὶ οἱ] μὲν
[Ἀλεξανδρεῖς ἐξεβήθησα]ν οἱ [δὲ]
[δοῦλοι αὐτῶν ἀπεκεφαλίσ]θ[ησαν,]
[μηδενὸς τῶν α]
[άντων αὐτῶν].

Some caution is required, however. The underlined letters can be read in the third-century recension, *CPJ* II 158b, which elsewhere heavily abbreviates and omits material from *CPJ* II 158a, and the original editors had read l. 27 as [. . .]τιου[. . .]. The idea that the Alexandrians were exiled and their slaves beheaded, which the restoration suggests, is discussed on p. 89.

Pucci 1983: 95–104 and 1984: 119–24 (*BL* 8.96) makes three suggestions for the text. She suggests that the *kyrios* in col. ii is the prefect rather than the emperor, and that in col. v.3 [κύ]ριε should be read for Musurillo's suggestion [Ῥαμ]μιε and at v.11 [Κλαυδί]ου Καίσαρος should be restored instead of Musurillo's [Τραιαν]οῦ Καίσαρος. Col. ii.5 refers to something being shown to the *kyrios* ([ἀπ]εδείχθη τῷ κυρίῳ) on the subject of where the war began. This seems likely to refer to a document or letter shown to the emperor at the hearing rather than to the prefect. From the plate, [κύ]ριε looks an unlikely reading as the letter before ι cannot be ρ and is, as Musurillo read, probably an μ. The last suggestion is not impossible, but I have suggested that col. v is more likely to preserve a document, perhaps a letter, possibly of Hadrian (see p. 56).

It has been thought that the Claudianus (Κλαυδιανοῦ) mentioned in col. iv was a Roman individual. I think it is an adjective, referring to something which happened in the time of Claudius, perhaps the events of AD 38–41. In *CPJ* II 153 we have references to the Claudian peace, and Claudian tribe (Κλαυδιανῆς εἰρήνης, φυλὴν Κλαυδιανάν).

Plates: *P.Par.* plate 45. *P.Lond.* Atlas I 146.

CPJ II 158B

The papyrus is 11 × 9 cm. It is written on the recto only.

Date: Early third century AD.

Provenance: Fayum.

Text: Published in 1895 as *BGU* I 341 (*P.Berol.* inv. 8111). Republished in Wilcken 1895: 482; 1909: 821–2; von Premerstein 1922: 302–5; *APM* and *Acta* IXb. Pack² 2229. I discuss the restoration for ll. 8–9: 'The Alexandrians were [exiled, their slaves] beheaded', on p. 89.

CPJ II 159A AND 159B

CPJ II 159a is 15 × 14.5 cm and preserves the remains of a column of writing, with the extreme line-endings of another column to the left. *CPJ* II 159b follows directly on from *CPJ* II 159a and is 15 × 44.7 cm. It preserves another four columns, with the line-beginnings of a fifth. The text is written on the verso of a strip of papyrus that is made up of sheets of discarded records, cut to size and pasted together. The recto (*P.Oxy.* XIV 1648) is a register from the reign of Commodus. The hand is an irregular, round, upright book-hand.

Date: Early third century AD.

Provenance: Oxyrhynchus.

Text: *CPJ* II 159b was first published in 1898 as *P.Oxy.* I 33. This text was republished in Wilcken 1909: 822–5; *W.Chr.* 20; von Premerstein 1923: 28–45 and listed as *P.Lond.Lit.* 119 (inv. 2435). *CPJ* II 159a was first published in Welles 1936: 7–23 as *P.Yale* inv. 1536. A combined text was published as *APM* and *Acta* XI; *CPJ* II 159a and 159b; Levick 1985: no. 204. Pack² 2232. I have followed the numbering of the columns in *CPJ* II. Hence I refer to them as *CPJ* II 159a cols. i–ii and 159b cols. i–v rather than cols. i–vii.

Musurillo's supplements for *CPJ* II 159b i.1 and ii.1 (*BL* 3.128) are included in the footnotes to *CPJ* II 159. Schwartz 1984b: 207–9 suggests that [ἀνηκόν]των could be restored at b v.1 and v.7 rather than [προσηκό]των.

Oliver 1974: 293 n. 1 offers a different translation of *CPJ* II 159a ii.14–b i.1. As he is led away Appian turns to a corpse and says: 'O corpse, when I reach my country (εἰς τὴν χώραν), I shall tell Heraclianus my father . . .' However, the *Acta Alexandrinorum* would express this meaning using the formula εἰς τὴν πατρίδα. Oliver notes a sense of the word χώρα that is attested in *SEG* XVII 759 l. 33: 'Your objection has an appointed time for a hearing (παραγραφὴ χώραν ἔχει)'. He translates the sentence: 'O corpse, now that I have been to my appointment in court, I say to my father Heraclianus . . .'

The correct translation of the phrase εἶς ἀπ'αἰῶνος in b iii.9–10 is controversial. Björck 1948: 72–4 (*BL* 7.126) suggests: 'Come Romans. See a person without parallel, a gymnasiarch and ambassador of Alexandria, led

away to death!' Musurillo and *CPJ* translate: 'Come Romans, and see a unique spectacle, an Alexandrian gymnasiarch and ambassador led to execution!' The phrase perhaps conveys the meaning: 'Behold the spectacle of a lifetime!'

Plates: *CPJ* III plate 3 shows *P.Oxy.* I 33. *TAPA* 67 (1936) plate 1 shows *P.Yale* inv. 1536.

CPJ III 456

The papyrus is 2.9 × 1.9 cm. It is written in an upright, round semi-literary hand.

Date: Late second century AD.

Provenance: Unknown.

Text: Published in 1939 as *P.Aberd.* 136. Republished as *APM* and *Acta* XV and *CPJ* III 456. Pack² 2236.

Plate: *P.Aberd.* plate 3.

C.PAP.LAT. 238

The papyrus is 22 × 15.4 cm. It is written in a cursive hand in Latin.

Date: Late first–early second century AD.

Provenance: Unknown.

Text: First published in Körtenbeutel 1940 as *P.Berol.* inv. 8334. Republished as *CPL* 238; Jones and Milns 1984: no. 85; Sherk 1988: no. 98.

Plate: Körtenbeutel 1940: plate 1.

P.ERL. 16

The middle of a column of twenty-seven lines is preserved. It is written on the recto in a careful hand. The verso was later used for a literary work in the early third century (*P.Erl.* inv. 5 verso = a fragment of Isocrates, *Ad Nicolem* 12–13).

Date: Late second–early third century AD.

Provenance: Unknown.

Text: Published in 1942 as *P.Erl.* 16 (= *P.Erl.* inv. 5 recto), and republished as *APM* and *Acta* XIV. Pack² 2235.

P.FAY. 19

The papyrus is 22 × 10.3 cm. It is written on the verso of a tax list, and consists of fifteen incomplete lines in a clear cursive hand. At the bottom

of the papyrus, the first five lines are repeated in a larger irregular uncial. The first editor suggested that the first text was written by a schoolmaster to be copied by a pupil. It is now stored at the Oriental Institute Museum of the University of Chicago.

Date: Mid- to late second century AD.

Provenance: Bakchias in the Fayum.

Text: Published in 1900 as *P.Fay*. 19. Republished as Smallwood 1966: no. 123; Jones and Milns 1984: no. 105; Pernigotti and Capasso 1994: 36–7. Pack² 2116.

Plate: Pernigotti and Capasso 1994: plate 57.

P.FAY. 217

The papyrus is 9.7 × 8.5 cm. It is written on the verso of an account in a semi-literary hand.

Date: Late second century AD.

Provenance: Fayum.

Text: Published in 1900 as *P.Fay*. 217. Republished as *APM* and *Acta* XIII. Pack² 2234.

P.GISS.LIT. 4.4

The papyrus is 11 × 13 cm. It is written on the recto in a literary hand with some cursive elements. It is from the archive of Apollonius, *strategos* of the district of Apollonopolis–Heptakomias.

Date: Second century AD (from the content, after AD 117).

Provenance: Unknown.

Text: Published in 1910 as *P.Giss*. 1 3 (inv. 20). Republished as *W.Chr*. 491; Smallwood 1966: no. 519; Jones and Milns 1984: no. 102; Pestman 1990: 2; Pestman, 1994: 29 II; *P.Giss.Lit*. 4.4.

Plates: *P.Giss.Lit*. plate 7. Roberts 1955: plate 15a.

P.GISS.LIT. 4.7

The papyrus consists of two large fragments, now in the collections of the Universities of Giessen and Yale, measuring 28.5 × 42 and 12 × 14.5 cm. There are several smaller detached fragments, whose positioning in the text is not clear. A (7 × 6.9 cm) and B (2.1 × 7.4 cm) are thought to be the left and right hand sides of the top of a further column. Further fragments are C (1.5 × 5.3 cm), D (2.2 × 2.9 cm), E (0.7 × 3 cm), F (1.7 × 2.8 cm) and an unnumbered fragment (4 × 9.3 cm). The papyrus is badly damaged,

and it is impossible to determine the precise number of columns from the extant fragments. The Yale fragment is believed to fit between cols. ii and iii, forming the top of col. iii. It is written on the recto only in an oval, sloping semi-literary hand.

Date: Late second century AD.

Provenance: Unknown, but the Giessen fragment was purchased in the Fayum, which may be its place of origin.

Text: The Giessen fragments were first published in 1939 as *P.Giss.Univ.* v 46, and largely restored by von Premerstein. More conservative editions were published as *APM* and *Acta* III. This fragment is catalogued as Pack² 2218. *CPJ* II 155 reprinted a version of *P.Giss.Univ.* v iii.20–35. *P.Yale*. inv. 1385 was incorporated into the Giessen fragment in Musurillo and Parássoglou 1974: 1–7. The combined text was published in 1984 as *P.Yale* II 107 and in 1994 as *P.Giss.Lit.* 4.7. Delia 1988: 286 publishes a possible restoration for i.11–16 by Koenen, but the suggestion is omitted from the latest edition of the text.

Plates: *P.Giss.*v plates IX–XI show the Giessen fragments. IX shows i and ii. X shows iii and iv and the unnumbered fragment (misplaced). XI shows a, b, c, d, e, and f. *ZPE* 15 (1974) plate 1a shows *P.Yale* inv. 1385. *P.Yale* II plate VII shows both the Giessen and the Yale fragments. *P.Yale* II plate VIII shows the other fragments.

P.GISS.LIT. 6.3

The whole papyrus is 27 × 46 cm and contains 'copies' of three or four decrees of Caracalla. It is written in a third-century cursive hand on the recto only.

Date: Early third century AD.

Provenance: Unknown.

Text: First published in 1910 as *P.Giss.* I 40 ii.16–29 (inv. 15). Republished as *W.Chr.* 22; *Sel. Pap.* II 215; *GC* 262; *P.Giss.Lit.* 6.3; Buraselis 1995: 185 (with 167 n. 5). The correct reading of ll. 27–8 remains controversial. The lines read:

> For the true Egyptians can easily be recognised among the linen weavers φωνηῃ ἄλλων [. . .]οι ἔχειν ὄψεις τε καὶ σχῆμα. ἔτι τε καὶ ζω[.] far removed from that of the city dwellers, shows them to be Egyptian peasants.

The three controversial words are φωνηῃ, [. . .]οι and ζω[.]. The *editio princeps* and *W.Chr.* 22 suggested these words were φωνῇ ἣ [δηλ]οῖ and ζω[ή]. Schubart (*BL* I.170) restored [αὐτ]οί. Wilcken 1924: 98 n. 2

(*BL* 2.2.66) read φωνήν and restored [δῆλ]οι. *Sel.Pap*. II 215 (*BL* 8.137) suggested φωνῇ ἢ [δηλ]οῖ <αὐτοὺς> ζω[ῇ]. *GC* (*BL* 9.93) reads φωνῇ ἤ. Buraselis 1995: 185 (*BL* 10.78–9) says φωνῇ ἤ [δηλ]οῖ ζω[ή] but at 167 n. 5 suggests that φωνήν and [δῆλ]οι are preferable, and that ζω[ῇ] is an unnecessary amendment for ζω[ή]. *P.Giss.Lit*. 6.3 reads φωνῇ ἢ, [αὐτ]οὶ and ζω[ῇ]. None of these readings dramatically alters the sense of the passage, which remains a bitter condemnation of Egyptian culture.

Plate: *P.Giss.Lit*. (1994): plate 15.

P.HARR. II 173

The papyrus is 6 × 18cm. It is written on the recto only in a cursive hand.

Date: Early third century AD.

Provenance: Unknown, but the editors of *P.Harr*. II state that most of the papyri from the collection come from J. Rendel-Harris' expedition to Oxyrhynchus in 1923.

Text: Published in 1985 as *P.Harr*. II 173 (*P.Harr*. inv. 659).

Plate: *P.Harr*. II plate 16.

P.HARR. II 240

The papyrus is 5.2 × 9.6 cm. It is written in a small, rounded, upright hand on the verso of a second-century account.

Date: Early second century AD.

Provenance: Unknown, but the editors of *P.Harr*. II state that most of the papyri from the collection come from J. Rendel-Harris' expedition to Oxyrhynchus in 1923.

Text: Published in Roberts 1949: 79–80, and republished as *APM* and *Acta* VI. It is catalogued as *P.Harr*. II 240 (*P.Harr*. inv. 658), but a text is not given. Pack² 2224.

Plate: *P.Harr*. II plate 14.

P.KÖLN VI 249

The papyrus consists of two fragments, *P.Köln* inv. 4701, measuring 10.3 × 10.5 cm, and *P.Köln* inv. 4722, measuring 5 × 5 cm. These combine to form a column of writing. There are traces of a second column. There is only writing on the recto.

Date: Early first century AD.

Provenance: Fayum.

Text: *P.Köln* inv. 4701 was published in Koenen 1970a: 217–83, with further corrections in Gray 1970: 227–38. This section of the text was republished as *P.Köln* I 10; *GC* 294; Ehrenberg and Jones 1975: 366. Gronewald 1983: 61–2 revealed that *P.Köln* inv. 4722 preserved the line-endings of ll. 11–14. The combined text was published as *P.Köln* VI 249; *SB* XVI 13033; Sherk 1984: no. 99; Braund 1985: no. 7; Sherk 1988: no. 12.

Plate: *ZPE* 52 (1983) plate 8.

P.MED. INV. 275

The papyrus is 7 × 7.5 cm. It is torn on all sides. It is written in a documentary hand of the second century on the recto only. The copy is a very careful one, and the scribe has even left spaces between the words.

Date: Early second century AD. Musurillo 1976: 337 dates the hand to the Hadrianic period.

Provenance: Unknown.

Text: Published in Daris 1973: 237–8.

P.MIL.VOGL. II 47

The papyrus is 39.5 × 23 cm. It is written only on the recto in a semi-cursive hand.

Date: Early second century AD.

Provenance: Tebtunis.

Text: Published in Cazzaniga 1937: 159–67. Republished as *APM* and *Acta* IXc; *CPJ* II 435; *P.Mil.Vogl.* II 47; Smallwood 1966: no. 55; *C.Pap.Hengstl* 17; Sherk 1988: 129c. Pack² 2230.

The date clause at the end of the edict reads: 'Year 19 of . . . . . os, [Phao(?)]phi 16'. The editor of *P.Mil.Vogl.* II 47 suggests that the first letter of the name could be read as α, which would date the edict to the nineteenth year of Hadrian (Ἁ[δριαν]οῦ), that is AD 136. However, Pucci 1983: 99–100 n. 17 (*BL* 8.220–1) reports that Gallazi and Bastianini have reread the traces as Τ̣ρ̣α̣ε̣̣α̣̣νου (= Τ̣ρ̣α̣ε̣̣<ϊ>α̣̣νοῦ), which dates the edict to year 19 of Trajan, AD 115. However, from a photograph, the date clause seems to read: 'Year 19 of Caesar (κα̣ί̣σ̣α̣ρ̣ος) [Phao(?)]phi 16'. 'Caesar' is used elsewhere in the text to refer to the current emperor. A date clause for Trajan's reign simply reading 'year 19 of Caesar' is not documentary, as the designation 'Caesar' can only refer to Augustus, but I have argued that the edict is not strictly a document.

Plate: Cazzaniga 1937: plate 1 shows the last two columns.

P.Oslo III 170

The papyrus is 8.6 × 2.3 cm. Fourteen lines of the middle of a column are preserved, written in a small, round, upright semi-literary book-hand.

Date: Late second–early third century AD.

Provenance: Privately purchased from a native of Behnesa in 1928, and possibly from Oxyrhynchus.

Text: Published in 1936 as *P.Oslo* III 170. Republished as *APM* and *Acta* XVII.

P.Oslo III 178

The papyrus is 6.6 × 8.5 cm. It is written in a large, clear literary hand.

Date: Second century AD.

Provenance: Oxyrhynchus.

Text: Published in 1936 as *P.Oslo* III 178.

P.Oxy. III 471

The papyrus is 30.5 × 46.5 cm. It is written on the recto only in an upright, oval literary hand, and is elaborately punctuated, like a literary work. The text is now housed in the Bodleian Library, Oxford.

Date: Second century AD.

Provenance: Oxyrhynchus.

Text: Published in 1903 as *P.Oxy.* III 471. Republished as *APM* and *Acta* VII: *Acta Maximi* I. Vandoni 1964: no. 55 republishes several lines of the text (100–1, 106–7). Pack² 2225.

P.Oxy. IV 683

The papyrus is 9.3 × 4.4 cm. It is written on the recto in rather small, round uncials. On the verso are two lines in cursive from the Severan period.

Date: Late second century AD.

Provenance: Oxyrhynchus.

Text: Published in 1904 as *P.Oxy.* IV 683. Pack² 2859.

P.Oxy. IV 706

The papyrus is 16.6 × 10.8 cm. No details are provided in the *editio princeps* regarding handwriting style.

Date: Early second century AD (after *c.* AD 115).
Provenance: Oxyrhynchus.
Text: Published in 1904 as *P.Oxy.* IV 706.

P.OXY. VII 1021

The papyrus is 13.5 × 5.9 cm. It is written in a small cursive hand.
Date: Mid-first century AD.
Provenance: Oxyrhynchus.
Text: Published in 1910 as *P.Oxy.* VII 1021. Republished as *W.Chr.* 113; Charlesworth 1939: 13; *Sel.Pap.* II 235; Smallwood 1967: no. 47; *C.Pap.Hengstl* 10; Sherk 1988: no. 61.

P.OXY. XII 1407

The papyrus consists of two fragments, the first of which contains twenty partially preserved lines.
Date: Late third century AD.
Provenance: Oxyrhynchus.
Text: Published as *P.Oxy.* XII 1407; Oliver, *GC* 290–3. Suggestions regarding the imperial titulature have been made in Hoogendijk and van Minnen 1987: 41–74; Sijpesteijn 1982a: 177–96; 1982b: 97–111; 1984: 77; Souris 1989: 56.

P.OXY. XIII 1612

The papyrus is 28.2 × 12 cm. One column of forty lines and the beginnings of the lines of a second column are preserved. A small, detached fragment also exists. Written on the recto only in a not very elegant, sloping hand. It was among the literary papyri unearthed in 1905–6.
Date: Early third century AD.
Provenance: Oxyrhynchus.
Text: Published in 1919 as *P.Oxy.* XIII 1612. Pack² 2517.
Plate: Wittek 1967: plate 8.

P.OXY. XVIII 2177

Fr. 1 is 13.2 × 16.7 cm (two columns). There are a further two columns on fr. II. There are also two further scraps (frr. III and IV). The papyrus is written on the recto only in a regular, narrow, sloping literary hand.
Date: Early third century AD.
Provenance: Oxyrhynchus.

Text: Published in 1941 as *P.Oxy.* XVIII 2177. Republished in *P.Schub.* pp. 87–90; *APM* and *Acta* X. Pack² 2231. Musurillo 1954: 201 discusses the problem of fr. II ii.13–14. He suggests that either οἱ τ̣ῇ̣ τρίτῃ π[όλει συλ]λαβόντες ('those helping from the third city') or οἱ ἐ̣π̣ι̣τρί<π> τ̣ῃ̣ π[όλει συλ]λαβόντες ('those helping the accursed city') are possible, but both offer problems of reading and interpretation.

Plate: *P.Oxy.* XVIII (1941) plate 13 shows fr. I.

P.OXY. XX 2264

The papyrus is 40.3 × 14.3 cm. Five incomplete columns are written on the verso of a land register in a cursive hand.

Date: Mid- to late second century AD.

Provenance: Oxyrhynchus.

Text: Published in 1952 as *P.Oxy.* XX 2264. Republished as *APM* and *Acta* V. Pack² 2222. The *editio princeps* interpreted the text as a defence speech, Musurillo as a prosecution speech. This has affected their translations. At ii.19–20, e.g. Roberts translates: 'For twelve years ago he did not criticise Caesar'; Musurillo: 'Did he not criticise Caesar twelve years ago?'

Col. iii. 9–10 reads εἰ δύνατον ἦν μισθῶσαι δ̣ήμι]ον αὐτόν ('If only it were possible to hire the public executioner'). Musurillo suggests αὐτοῦ for αὐτόν ('to hire *his* executioner'). Zucker 1958: 257 (*BL* 4.64) suggests αὑτόν ('to hire *himself* as executioner'). The original interpretation of the word as αὐτόν is most likely, but the sense of the sentence, indeed the whole column, remains unclear.

P.OXY. XXII 2339

The papyrus is 41.5 × 11 cm. The lower part of a roll made by joining four sheets of papyrus survives. On the recto are two columns, on the verso only one, with wide spacing to the left and right. The arrangement suggests that there were only three columns, with the recto preceding the verso, but the text breaks off mid-sentence. It is written in an irregular cursive hand.

Date: Mid-first century AD.

Provenance: Oxyrhynchus.

Text: Published in 1954 as *P.Oxy.* XXII 2339.

P.OXY. XXV 2435 RECTO

The papyrus is 14.5 × 26 cm. One column of writing in a medium-sized, roughly formed hand, halfway between literary and cursive, is preserved.

Date: First half of the first century AD.

Provenance: Oxyrhynchus.

Text: Published in 1959 as *P.Oxy.* XXV 2435 recto. Republished as Weingärtner 1969: 73–4; Ehrenberg and Jones 1976: no. 379; Jones and Milns 1984: no. 91; *GC* 295; Braund 1985: no. 557; Sherk 1988: no. 34a. Pack² 2216. Henrichs 1969: 150 suggests Weingärtner's reading [ψυ]χαῖς for [εὐ]χαῖς at l. 27 ('multiplied through being stored in your hearts', rather than 'in your *prayers*').

Plates: *P.Oxy.* XXV plate 12. Weingärtner 1969: plate 1. Turner 1987: plate 57 is a clear photograph of the first eight lines.

P.OXY. XXV 2435 VERSO

The papyrus is 14.5 × 26 cm. One column of writing is preserved. It is written in the same hand as *P.Oxy.* XXV 2435 recto.

Date: First half of the first century AD.

Provenance: Oxyrhynchus.

Text: Published in 1959 as *P.Oxy.* XXV 2435 verso; Braund 1985: no. 556; Ehrenberg and Jones 1976: no. 379; Jones and Milns 1984: no. 91; Sherk 1984: no. 111; Sherk 1988: no. 25. Pack² 2216. Bowman 1976: 154 (*BL* 7.150) suggested that [Ἀτεῖο(?)]υ Καπίτω[ν]ος could be read at l. 37. From the plate, the name following could be restored as Λ̣έ̣ν̣[τλου] Α̣υ̣τ̣ορος (= Αὔγουρος). The name Lentulus is often abbreviated in Greek in this way (e.g. *Res Gestae* ch. 6). See p. 72 on Cornelius Lentulus Augur. Heichelheim 1942: 14–20 (*BL* 7.150) has suggested that l. 40 σ̣ι̣α̣ν̣ου could be read as Σ<ε>ιανου. However, there are numerous other ways in which the traces could be read, and it is unlikely that the equestrian Sejanus was a member of this senatorial committee.

Barns 1961: 180 makes suggestions for l. 42 and ll. 51–8. His reading of l. 42, [Κύριε Σ]ε̣β̣α̣στὲ ἔπεμψε, is plausible. The passage would consequently translate: 'Lord Augustus, my city sent me.' He suggests for ll. 51–8:

51 ικητευσας (= ἱκετεύσας) εἶ (= εἶπεν)
[οἵ πρέ]σβ (= πρέσβεις) ὁ Σ̣ε̣β̣α̣στός εἶδεν αὐτὴν
[ ]ε̣π̣᾽ἀ̣γ̣α̣θωι ἐπ᾽ἀγαθωι μετὰ δὲ
[ταῦτ᾽εἶ (= εἶπεν)] Τ̣ι̣μ̣ο̣ξένος ῥήτωρ ὅσην καὶ τοῖς
55 [θεοῖ]ς τοῖς ὑ̣[π]ο̣υ̣ρ̣α̣νιοῖς παραχη (= παρέχεις) σπουδήν
(We are here?) Κ]ύριε Σ̄ε̣βαστε τοσαυ-
[τὴν καὶ] τ̣οῖς σ̣οῖς Ἀλ̣ε̣ξανδρεῦσι δεομέ[[υ. .]]$^{\text{νοι}}$
[σὲ πα]ρ̣ασχ̣ε̣[ῖ]ν̣ σήμερο̣ν.

However, εἶ as an abbreviation for εἶπεν is highly unlikely in this text. When Augustus speaks in l. 52, for example, no verb of saying is employed. I think that the original reading of l. 51 as referring to a victory (νίκη) is more likely than Barns' supplement. Turner 1963: 346 approves of the emendation παρέχεις σπουδήν, but expresses little confidence in the other suggestions. With the *editio princeps* reading of l. 56 as εὐ[χ]όμ[εθα] 'we beg', rather than 'we are here', the sense of Timoxenes' speech could be: '[We worship you], Lord Augustus, with as much zeal as is granted to the heavenly [gods]; just so much also we beg that you grant your Alexandrians today.'

Plate: *P.Oxy*. XXV plate 13.

P.OXY. XXXIV 2690

The papyrus is 7.5 × 17 cm. Two columns are preserved, written on the verso of a late-second century land register. It is broken off on three sides, but there is a margin of 2 cm at the top. The hand is oval and sloping.

Date: Third century AD.

Provenance: Oxyrhynchus.

Text: Published in 1968 as *P.Oxy*. XXXIV 2690.

Plate: *P.Oxy*. XXXIV plate 3.

P.OXY. XXXIV 2725

The papyrus is 16 × 13.3 cm. It is written in a cursive hand of the late first century.

Date: 29 April AD 71.

Provenance: Oxyrhynchus.

Text: Published in 1968 as *P.Oxy*. XXXIV 2725. Republished in Jones and Milns 1984: no. 94.

Miller 1978: 139 has suggested πρῶτον ἐν παρεμβολῇ, ἔπ̣ε̣[ιτα κοό]ρ̣ταν εἰς Σαραπῖον ἀπὸ τοῦ Σαραπίου εἰς τ[ὴν] ἱππικὸ[υ τούρμ]ην, restoring a military inspection of the city: Titus visited the soldiers at the camp (Nicopolis), then a cohort at the Serapeum, then a cavalry squadron. But this is not very plausible. Titus would appear to have followed his father's route through the city. Youtie (*P.Oxy*. XXXIV p. 129) restores: πρῶτον ἐν παρεμβολῇ, ἔπ̣ε̣[ιτ' ἀπα]ν̣ταν (= ἁπαντῶν) εἰς Σαραπῖον ἀπὸ τοῦ Σαραπίου εἰς τ[ὸ] ἱππικὸ[ν ἀπῆλθ]εν.

Plates: *P.Oxy*. XXXIV plate 8. Jones and Milns 1984: p. 149.

P.Oxy. XLII 3020

The papyrus is 22 × 9.8 cm. There is also a small, detached, unreadable fragment. The first fragment contains the upper part of two columns, both almost full width. The hand is irregular and semi-cursive. There is writing on the recto only.

Date: First half of the first century AD.

Provenance: Oxyrhynchus.

Text: Published in 1974 as *P.Oxy.* XLII 3020. Col. i is republished as *GC* 5; Sherk 1984: no. 100; Braund 1985: no. 555.

Plate: *P.Oxy.* XLII plate 10.

P.Oxy. XLII 3021

The papyrus is 6 × 13 cm. It is written on the verso of a scrap of papyrus in a semi-cursive hand.

Date: Late first century AD.

Provenance: Oxyrhynchus.

Text: Published in 1974 as *P.Oxy.* XLII 3021. Hennig 1975: 320 (*BL* 7.155) makes a suggestion for ll. 3–4, based on a section of a later version of the *Acta Isidori*, *CPJ* II 156a ii.5–6:

[μετὰ] ταῦτα υ (= οἱ) ο̣ὐ̣[ν]κ̣αθημέ-
[νοι αὐτῷ̣ συγκλητικοὶ μ]ετὰ ταῦτα εἰσῆλθαν.

Hennig also suggests that l. 10 ([ ]αιων λέγετε) refers to a speech of the emperor: '[ambassadors of the Jews], speak!' However, ll. 9–10 more plausibly read: '[the emperor:] 'Ambassadors of the Alexandrians, [what do] you say [concerning the] Jews?' ([Ἀλεξ]ο̣ὐ̣ν̣δρέων πρέσβεις | [τί περὶ τῶν Ἰουδ]αίων λέγετε;).[9]

The first editor noted that [Ἀγρίπ]π̣ας was a likely reading at l. 3 ('[the emperor entered with Agrip]pa and sat down'). Ll. 5–6 introduce and name the Greek ambassadors. The editor read [ ] Τιβέριος Κλαύδιος | [ ]ς Ἰσίδωρος Διονυσίο<υ>, making Isidorus the son of Dionysius. This relationship is not hinted at elsewhere in the *Acta Alexandrinorum* literature or mentioned by Philo. It is therefore better to take the line as a list of Alexandrian ambassadors: [ο]ς, Ἰσίδωρος, Διονυσίο<ς>. There is no room for the Jewish ambassadors to be named individually, so l. 7 could be restored as [καὶ οἱ τῶν Ἰουδαίων] πρέσβεις πάντες ('and all the ambassadors of the Jews') or similar.

[9] Cf. *P.Oxy.* XLII 3023 ii.4–5: 'What do the Antiochenes say concerning these claims?'

Lukaszewicz 2000: 59–65 and 2001: 125–9 suggests the following for ll. 5–7, based on the discovery in 2000 of an inscription referring to a Tiberius Claudius Isidorus who was a gymnasiarch:

[ ] Τιβέριος Κλαύδιος
[Βάρβιλλος καὶ Τιβέριος Κλαύδιο]ς Ἰσίδωρος, Διονυσιο<ς>
[καὶ οἱ ἄλλο]ι πρέσβεις πάντες.

However, Isidorus is always just called 'Isidorus' elsewhere in the literature, with no allusion to this supposed Roman citizenship. The list in any case is not complete as not all of the ambassadors' names and patronyms are presented. It is perhaps as garbled as the other such examples, e.g. in *CPJ* II 153 and *P.Oxy*. XXV 2435 verso.

P. OXY. XLII 3022

The papyrus is 19.3 × 16.8 cm. It is written on the verso of a badly damaged private letter in a large, crude hand.

Date: Early second century AD.

Provenance: Oxyrhynchus.

Text: Published in 1974 as *P.Oxy*. XLII 3022. Republished as *GC* 46; Jones and Milns 1984: no. 87. *GC* 46 (*BL* 9.199) restores a filial epithet before l. 1: '[Emperor Caesar Nerva Trajan, son of the divine Nerva]', rather than '[Emperor Caesar Nerva Trajan]'. At ll. 2–3 he suggests Ἀλεξ[ανδρέ|ων τῇ πόλει χ(αίρειν)]; at ll. 3–4 ἡ[μῶν ἀπο|δεχομένο]ς; at l. 5 [εὔνοια]ν; at l. 8 [ἕνεκ]α. Several of these were suggested in the footnotes of the *editio princeps*, but the original editor stated that [ἕνεκ]α was not a possible reading at l. 8.

Plate: *GC* plate 3.

P. OXY. XLII 3023

The papyrus is 15.5 × 12 cm. The remains of two columns are preserved on the recto. The verso was later written on, but this text remains unidentified.

Date: Second century AD.

Provenance: Oxyrhynchus.

Text: Published in 1974 as *P.Oxy*. XLII 3023.

P. OXY. XLVII 3361

The papyrus is 13 × 13 cm. It is written on the recto only. The hand slopes to the left, and the individual letters have cursive forms.

Date: Mid-second century AD.

Provenance: Oxyrhynchus.

Text: Published in Thomas 1972: 103–12. Republished as *SB* XII 11069; *P.Oxy.* XLVII 3361; *GC* 163.

Plate: *BICS* 19 (1972) plate 7.

P.OXY. LI 3607

The papyrus is 6.5 × 15.5 cm. It is written on a patch which was then pasted onto the recto of a piece of papyrus already used for a land register. The hand is not described by the editors.

Date: Third century AD (before 13 June AD 238).

Provenance: Oxyrhynchus.

Text: Published as *P.Oxy.* LI 3607.

P.OXY. LV 3781

The papyrus is 6.5 × 16 cm. It is written on the recto of a piece of papyrus. The verso is blank. The script is described as small and rapid with many abbreviations used.

Date: 25 August AD 117.

Provenance: Oxyrhynchus.

Text: Published as *P.Oxy.* LV 3781. Republished in Pestman 1994: 29 I.

Plate: *P.Oxy.* LV plate 3.

P.OXY. LXVII 4592

The papyrus consists of two fragments measuring 14.3 × 14 and 3.2 × 2.1 cm. It is written on the recto. The verso contains a single line of writing, apparently an address. It is written in a semi-literary hand, with infrequent ligatures and only occasional cursive forms.

Date: Late second–early third century AD.

Provenance: Oxyrhynchus.

Text: Published in Barns 1966: 141–6. Republished and discussed in Rea 1967: 391–6; Parsons 1967a: 397–401; Bowman 1970: 20–6; *GC* 185; Schwartz 1985: 122–4. Republished as *SB* X 10295. I have employed Bowman's interpretation of the text as a letter of Avidius Cassius (*BL* 6.163–4). Schwartz 1985: 122–4 reargues the case that the writer was Alexander Severus (*BL* 8.358).

Plates: *JEA* 52 (1966) plate 35. *JRS* 60 (1970) plate 4. Bowman 1986: plate 27.

P.RYL. I 437

The papyrus is 10.8 × 6 cm. It is written in a careless semi-cursive hand on the recto only.

Date: First century AD.

Provenance: Unknown.

Text: Published in 1915 as *P.Ryl.* II 437. Republished as *APM* and *Acta* XIX. Pack² 2239.

SB I 421

The papyrus is a small fragment consisting of twelve lines.

Date: Third century AD (*c.* AD 235–6). Loriot 1973: 153 suggests that the date is March AD 235.

Provenance: Unknown.

Text: Published in 1913 as *SB* I 421.

SB I 3924

The papyrus is 28 × 105 cm. It is written on the recto only in a semi-cursive hand that at times imitates book-hand.

Date: Early first century AD (after AD 19).

Provenance: Unknown.

Text: Published in Wilamowitz-Moellendorff and Zucker 1911: 794–821. Republished as *SB* I 3924; Weingärtner 1969: 108–9, 124–5; *Sel.Pap.* II 211; Ehrenberg and Jones 1976: 320b; the second edict is published as Jones and Milns 1984: no. 78; Braund 1985: no. 558; Sherk 1988: no. 34b; *GC* 16–17.

The reading of ll. 42–3 has proved controversial. The *editio princeps* read: τὰ δὲ ἡμέτερα ἐν ὑ̣π̣ο̣π̣α̣ρ̣ε̣τ̣ι̣α̣ (= ὑποπαραιτίᾳ) ἐστιν τῆς ἐκείνων θειότητος. Karlbfleisch 1942: 374–6 (*BL* 3.168) read the garbled phrase as ὑπ<π>ηρεσίᾳ, and Post 1944: 80–2 (*BL* 3.168) as ενλογαπαρεπ<όμενα>. Wilcken 1928: 49 simply read 'ε. . . . . .' Oliver 1971: 229–30 (*BL* 6.127) suggested ἐν λόγ<ῳ> πάρεργα – 'The deeds reputed as mine are but an additional working of their divinity', and this reading is now generally accepted.

Plates: Wilamowitz-Moellendorff and Zucker 1911 plate 5. Poethke 1967: 148.

SB VI 9213

The remains of two columns, roughly 17 cm high, are preserved. The text is written in a neat cursive hand on the recto only.

Date: First half of the third century AD.

Provenance: Hermopolis Magna.

Text: Published in Benoît and Schwartz 1949: 17–33. Republished as *APM* and *Acta* XVIII; *SB* VI 9213. Pack² 2238. Benoît and Schwartz 1949: 26 offer a restoration of i.31–ii.5, but none of the subsequent editions have adopted their restored text.

SB VI 9528

The papyrus is 9 × 13 cm. It is broken off on the top, below and to the right. It is written in a careless hand with cursive elements.

Date: Late first–early third century AD.

Provenance: Fayum.

Text: Published in Gerstinger 1958: 195–202 as *P.Graec.Vindob.* 25.787. Republished as *SB* VI 9528 and *GC* 297. The restoration of Jones 1973: 309 (*BL* 7.209) for l. 6 [τῶν κοιν]ῶν is generally accepted.

SB XII 11012

The papyrus is 27 × 16.2 cm. The tops of two columns survive. It is written on the verso in a semi-literary hand with cursive elements.

Date: Mid to late first century AD.

Provenance: Fayum.

Text: Published in Montevecchi 1970: 6–7 (*P.Med.* inv. 70.01). Republished in *SB* XII 11012; Braund 1985: no. 592; Sherk 1988: no. 62; *GC* 39.

There has been some controversy over the correct reading of i.6–8. The *editio princeps* read χρυσοῦν στέ[φαν]ον ἔπεμψά γε χαρισθή[σεσ]θ̣α̣ι̣ or χαρισθή[σεσ]θ̣ε̣. Turner 1975: 11 n. 32 (*BL* 7.224) suggested χρυσοῦν στέ[φαν]ον <ὃν> ἐπέμψατε χαριστή[ριο]ν. Souris 1989: 52 (*BL* 9.271–2) suggests: χρυσοῦν στέ[φαν]ον <ὃν> ἐπέμψατε χαρισθή[σομ]α̣ι̣ meaning 'I will be freely returning the gold crown, which you have sent'.

BL 7.224 also reports an amendment for col. ii.9 by Cifoletti who suggested ἀ[πο]δέχο[μαι] for the ἀ[να]δέχο[μαι] of the *editio princeps*. The edition of the *GC* (*BL* 9.271–2) also suggests at i.11 ὁμ̣[οῦ τοῖς] rather than the οἰμ̣[εῖς (= ὑμεῖς) ο]ἰ̣ of the *editio princeps*.

Plates: *Aegyptus* 50 (1970) plate 1. Montevecchi 1973: plate 42.

SB XIV 11915

The papyrus is 5.5 × 5.5 cm. It is written on the recto only in a small, round cursive hand.

Date: Early to mid-second century AD (Musurillo 1964: 147–9).

Provenance: Unknown.

Text: Published in 1920 by N. Chaviaras in *Arch. Eph.* 1920 p. 73, with a new edition republished by A. Chatzes in the same volume p. 75. Republished in 1939 as *P.Athen*. 58; Musurillo 1963–4: 16–19 and 1964: 147–9; Parássoglou 1976: 56–7; *SB* XIV 11915. I have used the text of *SB* XIV 11915, which is based on the revision of the text in Parássoglou 1976: 56–8 (*BL* 7.231).

Plate: Parássoglou 1976: 60.

SB XVI 12255

The papyrus is 21.5 × 7.5 cm. It is written on the recto in a tidy uncial with cursive elements. The verso contains an account, in a hand of a later period. The text partially preserves the middle section of a column of writing.

Date: Late first century AD.

Provenance: Unknown.

Text: Published in 1939 as *P.Fouad* 8. Republished as *APM* and *Acta* vb; *CPJ* II 418a; *SB* XVI 12255; Merkelbach 1958: 111–2; McCrum and Woodhead 1961: no. 41; Sherk 1988: no. 81. Pack² 2223.

The text is fragmentary. Coles, Geissen and Koenen 1973: 235 (*BL* 7.74) re-examined the original papyrus and have made the following amendments: l. 3 [το]ὺς Ῥωμα[ίους], l. 4 []ᾳ̣τ̣[.]ε̣τ̣[.]στον κ̣[ ], l. 6 [ ] στ^ά̣πάν̣των, l. 7 μ rather than μ̣, l. 8 κ̣α̣τ̣ ὅλον, l. 13 ὁ ἥ̣λ̣ι̣ος ὁ ἀνατέλλων, and at l. 16 suggest the supplement [τῇ ἀληθεί]α̣ ὁ̣ Ἄμμωνος υἱός. The supplement Σάρ[απις ὁ νέος] suggested in Nock 1957: 118 (*BL* 4.31) is generally accepted. Montevecchi 1981: 155–70 has suggested that the participle ἀνατέλλων means 'visiting' based on *SB* I 4284, where Severus and Caracalla are described as 'rising (ἀνατείλαντες) through [i.e. visiting] their Egypt'.

Musurillo 1954: 30–1 and Jouguet 1940: 201–20 (*BL* 3.59), and the edition of McCrum and Woodhead 1961 (*BL* 5.32) and Koenen 1968b: 256 (*BL* 6.40) offer different potential supplements.

Plates: Wellesley 1975: plate 6. Burr 1955: front-piece.

SB XX 15145

The papyrus is 18.5 × 9 cm. It is written along the fibres and is complete at the top only. The verso is blank. The first hand is described as narrow, upright, 'chancery' script, the second hand, in which the imperial letter is copied, is smaller, slanting and less elegant.

Date: Third century AD. It was probably copied after the prefecture of Aurelius B[asileus], mentioned in l. 13, who was prefect in AD 242–5.

Provenance: Unknown.

Text: Published in 1991 in Lewis and Stephens 1991: 88 as *P.Yale* inv. 1599; republished as *SB* XX 15145.

SB XXII 15203

The papyrus is 13 × 10.5 cm. It is written in an irregular semi-literary hand, with cursive elements. The bottom eleven lines are preserved on the recto, with the line beginnings missing. There are traces of a second column to the right. The verso deals with bureaucratic matters.

Date: Early to mid-first century AD.

Provenance: Unknown.

Text: Published in Balconi 1993: 3–20 as *P.Med.* inv. 68.53. A revised text was republished in Balconi 1994: 219–22. Lewis 1997: 21–33 suggests λαβὼν [ἀφορμ]ήν, 'seizing the opportunity', rather than λαβὼν [τὴν ἀρχ]ὴν.

Plates: *Aegyptus* 73 (1993) pp. 5 and 19 (recto and verso respectively).

P.SCHUB. 42

The papyrus is roughly 28 cm long. It is written on the recto only, with a little punctuation and documentary abbreviations. Musurillo reports that it has now been lost.

Date: Second century AD.

Provenance: Unknown.

Text: Published in 1950 as *P.Schub.* 42. Republished as *APM* and *Acta* VII: *Acta Maximi* II. Pack² 2226.

PSI XI 1222

The papyrus consists of two fragments measuring 9.5 × 17.5 and 2 × 5 cm. It is written on the recto only.

Date: Late second–early third century AD.

Provenance: Oxyrhynchus.

Text: Published in Bolelli 1934: 15–17, then in 1935 as *PSI* XI 1222. Pack² 2522. Merkelbach 1958: 115 offers the following plausible restoration of i.3–7:

ἐν[τεῦθ-]
[εν] τῶν προοιμίων ἠρχόμην [ἄν].

ἔστ̣[ι γὰρ σύνη]θες ἅπασι τ[οῖς οὐκ ἐκ π]α-
ρακλήσεως μόνον ἀλλ[ὰ καὶ δι' ἰδ]ί̣-
ας.

PUG I 10

The papyrus is 30 × 13 cm and was made by gluing two sheets of papyrus together. To the left of the join are the remains of what appears to be a financial document, on the left is the letter of Nero to the Alexandrians. It is written in a hasty, untidy hand.

Date: Mid- to late first century AD (after AD 55).

Provenance: Unknown.

Text: Published in Traversa 1969: 718–25 as *PUG* inv. 8562. Republished as *SB* X 10615; Bingen 1969: 151–2; *PUG* I 10; *GC* 33.

The edition of *GC* (*BL* 9.361) amends the titulature in ll. 1–2 from 'Nero Claudius, son [of the divine Claudius], descendant of the divine [Caesar] Augustus' to 'Nero Claudius [Caesar Augustus], son [of a god], descendant [even by birth] of the divine Augustus'. W. Williams 1975: 42 n. 11 (*BL* 7.274) suggests ἀ̣[νεγνώ]σθη at l. 18 instead of π̣[ροετ]έθη. If this supplement is correct, the letter would have been 'read out' publicly in the agora rather than 'displayed'.

Plates: Amelotti and Migliardi 1970: plate 1. *PUG* I: plate 7.

APPENDIX II

The status of the Alexandrian Jews

The status held by the Alexandrian Jews, the primary cause of the violence between Greeks and Jews in Alexandria, was a contentious issue in antiquity and remains controversial among modern scholars. A major problem is that the full details about Augustus' settlement of Egypt have not survived. Augustus imposed a social hierarchy in Egypt with political, administrative, fiscal and legal privileges for the highest social classes. Roman citizens and the citizens of the Greek cities in Egypt (Alexandria, Ptolemais, Naucratis and later Antinoopolis) topped this social hierarchy, and enjoyed numerous privileges, including exemption from the poll tax. The residents of the nome capitals, the metropolites, paid a slightly reduced rate of poll tax, but the inhabitants of the *chora*, classed simply as 'Egyptians', formed the lowest freeborn status group. The Jews in the *chora* were also legally classed as 'Egyptians'. How the large Jewish community at Alexandria, around a fifth to a third of the population according to modern estimates, fitted into this civic stratification is unclear.[1]

The ancient evidence is polemical. Jewish writers, such as Philo and Josephus, speak in terms which would imply that the Jews enjoyed Alexandrian citizenship and were therefore among the highest social group in the province. The Greek writers, such as Apion, Chaeremon and the authors of the *Acta Alexandrinorum*, vehemently deny this claim, and instead equate the Jews to the 'Egyptians', i.e. the lowest social group in the province. The 'documentary' evidence does little to illuminate the situation. Josephus' versions of the edicts of Claudius regarding the status of the Jews in Alexandria and elsewhere in the empire in AD 41 and Nemesion's 'copy' of Claudius' letter do not appear to adhere strictly to the text of the original documents.[2] A petition written by an Alexandrian Jew in the Augustan period is relevant, but its significance is controversial.[3]

[1] E.g. Delia 1988: 286–8. [2] See pp. 25–8. [3] *CPJ* II 151.

The general consensus on the status of the Alexandrian Jews in the early twentieth century was based solely on the writings of Philo and Josephus and considered all Alexandrian Jews to be Alexandrian citizens.[4] After the publication of Claudius' letter in 1924, in which the emperor referred to the Jews as living in a city which was not their own, the prevalent view was that the Alexandrian Jews were not citizens but were actively pressing for this privilege to be granted.[5] It has been argued that the Alexandrian Jews were organised into an officially recognised independent political association called *politeuma*, as all Diasporan Jews were, and that they did not strive for the Alexandrian citizenship and would not have wanted it, as this would entail participating in civic cults, which Judaism prohibited them from doing. The Jews therefore strove to make the rights of their *politeuma* equal to those of the Greek citizen body. According to this theory the violence in Alexandria between the Greeks and the Jews was caused by the Jews attempting to improve the standing of their *politeuma* and the Greeks attempting to abolish these *politeuma* rights.[6] However, this theory has been criticised by scholars who point out that those *politeumata* attested in the Hellenistic period either have the technical sense of a ruling class within a city, or are private, voluntary social associations.[7] Neither the Jews nor their enemies ever use the term 'the Jewish *politeuma*'. Indeed, the Jews always refer to themselves as 'the crowd' or 'the gathering' (*synagoge*).

Documentary evidence would suggest that the Alexandrian Jews were organised into a *politeuma*. There are several references to Jewish *politeumata*: two at Berenice in Cyrene, one at Heracleopolis and one at Alexandria. The Berenice *politeumata* would appear to be administrative bodies of Jews rather than the whole body of them.[8] The Heracleopolis *politeuma* is attested in documents of the Ptolemaic period belonging to the years 144/3–133/2 BC which show the jurisdiction of the *archontes* and *politarches* who led this community.[9] The existence of this *politeuma* appears to confirm an Alexandrian Jewish *politeuma*, which was hitherto only referred to in a literary source. In this, the Alexandrian Jewish *politeuma* is listed as one of four distinct groups of Jews in the city, the others being the priests, the elders of the translators, and the leaders of the

[4] E.g. Juster 1914. See Bell 1924: 10–16 for this stage of the debate.
[5] E.g. Bell 1924: 16.
[6] Smallwood 1976: 227–30; Kasher 1985 *passim*.
[7] Biscardi 1984: 1201–15; Zuckermann 1985–8: 171–85; Lüderitz 1994: 183–225; Thompson Crawford 1984: 1069–75.
[8] Lüderitz 1994: 210–22.
[9] See Cowey and Maresch 2001; Honigman 2002: 251–66; Kasher 2003: 257–68.

multitude.[10] This suggests that it contained only a restricted group of Jews, not the whole body of them.

A close examination of the evidence does not support the view that the Alexandrian Jews held the Alexandrian citizenship as a body. Instead, it appears that they were organised into an officially recognised community, a *politeuma*, with significant and specific privileges. Augustus had no reason to punish the Alexandrian Jews by classing them among the lowest social group in Egypt, and was more likely to grant them a privileged status. The Jews had been of great service to Rome in the preceding years. When Gabinius led a Roman army into Egypt in 55 BC, it was the Jewish garrison at Pelusium that gave him passage.[11] When Julius Caesar was besieged in Alexandria by a rising of the populace, it was Jewish forces at Heliopolis and Memphis that allowed reinforcements to enter the city.[12] Josephus hints that the Jews also offered aid to Augustus against Antony.[13]

A close reading of the literary sources reveals that the Alexandrian Jews did not hold citizenship but instead held many privileges. Philo, an Alexandrian Jew himself, and Josephus, who had visited Alexandria at least once, *should* provide the best evidence.[14] However, both writers employ ambiguous terms to describe the status of the Alexandrian Jews. They refer to them with the term *polites*, which officially means 'a citizen of a *polis*' but can be used informally to mean 'a resident'. Another common term, *politeia* (with the related *ise politeia*), can range in meaning from 'citizenship', 'constitution', 'civic rights' to 'way of life'. The term 'Alexandrian', with the official meaning of an Alexandrian citizen, could also informally mean a resident of Alexandria. Philo and Josephus may use these ambiguous terms because they were writing for an audience which was familiar with the situation at Alexandria and would interpret them correctly, making a precise definition unnecessary.

On several occasions Philo calls his fellow Jews 'Alexandrians'.[15] He also frequently refers to the *politeia* of the Alexandrian Jews.[16] Unfortunately, Philo does not record the part of the hearing before Gaius in which the Jews spoke about their *politeia*. However, Philo's 'Jewish *politeia*' is not the same as Alexandrian citizenship. Philo remarks that, in issuing the edict renouncing the Alexandrian Jews as 'foreigners', Flaccus destroyed 'our ancestral customs and our participation in political rights'.[17] Philo also stresses that, if his embassy to Gaius did not succeed,

[10] *Letter of Pseudo-Aristeas* 308–10. [11] Joseph. *AJ* 14.99; *BJ* 1.175.
[12] Joseph. *AJ* 14.127–36, 193; *BJ* 1.187–92; *Ap*. 2.61.
[13] Joseph. *Ap*. 2.61, speaking of the Jews' 'services' to Octavian. [14] Joseph. *Vit*. 415–16.
[15] E.g. Philo *Leg*. 183, 194; *Flacc*. 80. [16] Philo *Leg*. 193, 349, 363. [17] Philo *Flacc*. 53–4.

what political right [of the Jews] would not be overthrown? Both the specifically Jewish traditions and their general rights vis-à-vis each individual city would be overthrown, shipwrecked, and sent to the bottom of the sea.[18]

For Philo, the Jewish *politeia* would appear to be the Jewish right to observe their ancestral customs and the right to exercise their political privileges, as granted and safeguarded by the emperors. Philo may reveal the true status of the Alexandrian Jews in Flaccus' speech, where the prefect allegedly lamented treating the Jews as 'foreigners without civic rights' rather than 'privileged residents', implying that the Alexandrian Jews were privileged residents of Alexandria who enjoyed some civic rights.[19]

Josephus states that the Jews were among the original founders of Alexandria and were granted special rights by Alexander the Great. Alexander, he alleges, granted the Jews the right to reside in Alexandria on terms of equality (*isomoiria*) with the Greeks of the city, and they were made *politai* with equal citizen rights (*isopoliteia*) to the Macedonians.[20] He also refers to letters of Alexander and Ptolemy I and a bronze stele set up in Alexandria by Julius Caesar recording Jewish rights and declaring the Jews to be *politai*.[21] Josephus also mentions that Ptolemy I granted the Alexandrian Jews *isopoliteia* with the Greeks of the city, and, 'citing' the edict of Claudius, states that the 'kings' granted the Alexandrian Jews *ise politeia* with the Greeks.[22] However, Josephus also speaks of the Alexandrian Jews in terms that would suggest they were not citizens. Hence they are 'the Jews living in Alexandria called Alexandrians', the 'Jewish race', or simply 'the Jews of Alexandria'.[23]

Josephus also states that the Jews in Antioch, Cyrene, Ionia and Sardis enjoyed citizenship of their respective cities using the same ambiguous terminology. However, an examination of these claims reveals that the Jews resident in these cities did not hold the citizenship of their *poleis*. The *politeia* of the Antiochene Jews did not equate to Antiochene citizenship. Josephus claims that the Antiochenes petitioned Titus to abolish the Jewish *politeia*, but elsewhere reveals that they actually asked him to destroy the bronze tablets on which the rights of the Jews in the city were inscribed.[24] Josephus alleges that the Jews of Cyrene were granted *isonomia* with the Greeks by their kings.[25] However, he also cites the authority of a certain Strabo of Cappadocia, who differentiates the Jews from the citizen body by dividing the population of Cyrene into four distinct groups: citizens,

[18] Philo *Leg.* 371. [19] Philo *Flacc.* 172.
[20] Joseph. *Ap.* 2.35; *BJ* 2.487; *AJ* 12.8. On this *isopoliteia* see Bringmann 2005: 7–21.
[21] Joseph. *AJ* 14.188; *Ap.* 2.36–7. [22] Joseph. *AJ* 12.7–8; 19.281.
[23] Joseph. *AJ* 14.113; *Ap.* 2.44; *AJ* 19.285; *Ap.* 2.55.
[24] Joseph. *AJ* 12.121; *BJ* 7.100–11. [25] Joseph. *AJ* 16.160.

farmers, resident aliens and Jews.[26] Josephus uses the terms *politai* and *politeia* to mean ancestral way of life when discussing the Jews in Ionia and Sardis. In the *Antiquities* Josephus relates how the Ionian Jews petitioned Marcus Agrippa in 14 BC, claiming that Antiochus son of Seleucus had granted them *politeia*, which the Ionian Greeks were attempting to deprive them of. Agrippa decided to preserve the *status quo* in Ionia, which meant that the Jews were free to pursue their ancestral customs.[27] In a second version of this hearing Josephus states that Agrippa confirmed Jewish privileges. There is no mention of *politeia* in this version.[28] Josephus relates how 'the Jewish *politai*' at Sardis approached the council and people of the city, asking for confirmation of their privileges. They asked that

> in accordance with their accepted customs [they may] come together and have a communal life and adjudicate suits among themselves and that a place be given to them in which they might gather together with their wives and children and offer their ancestral prayers and sacrifices to God . . .[29]

The privileges were granted. Clearly the Jews in Sardis were not citizens of the *polis*, despite being described as *politai*. They asked for their ancestral privileges rather than for the privileges of citizens.

Greek writers emphasise that the Alexandrian Jews did not hold citizenship. Apion questioned the Jews' right to call themselves 'Alexandrians', claiming that they were unpatriotic, continually disloyal to their rulers, and had rightfully been denied certain privileges enjoyed by Alexandrian citizens. Apion cites as an example the refusal of both Cleopatra and Germanicus to distribute rations of corn to the Jews. The fact that the Jews refused to worship the Alexandrian gods, and their responsibility for recent disturbances, make it absurd for some Jews to claim they were Alexandrian citizens, Apion argues, and their failure to worship the emperor shows their seditious nature.[30] Significantly Josephus' counter-arguments are weak and his main tactic appears to be to discredit Apion, presenting him as a bitter, unpleasant and inaccurate writer whose work could not be trusted. While Josephus admits, for example, that Cleopatra and Germanicus did withhold corn from the Alexandrian Jews, he claims that this was only because there was not enough corn to distribute to everyone.[31] Apion's assertion that this was because the Jews were not full citizens is more convincing.

The Jews in Alexandria, like the Jews in other Greek cities in the east, therefore were not citizens of their city, but were residents organised into their own *politeuma* with extensive privileges. During the Principate,

[26] *Ibid.* 14.114–15. [27] *Ibid.* 12.125–6. [28] *Ibid.* 16.27–61.
[29] *Ibid.* 14.259–61. [30] Joseph. *Ap.* 2.33–78. [31] Barclay 1998: 194–221.

emperors consistently upheld such privileges as the right to follow Jewish ancestral customs, which involved allowing the body of Jewish residents in a city a measure of independence and autonomy. In Alexandria, for example, the Jewish residents were allowed a governing body of elders. This body was initially headed by an ethnarch, who Josephus states governed his people as if he were the head of a sovereign state, but, when the first ethnarch died in AD 10–11, Augustus allowed a council of elders (*gerousia*) to replace him.[32] Documents reveal that the Jews had their own record office.[33] Other privileges involved being allowed to send their own embassies to Rome. Philo reveals that the Alexandrian Jews shared the 'privilege' of Alexandrian citizens of being beaten with the flat of a sword rather than flogged, as the Egyptians were.[34]

It is likely that one other privilege of the Alexandrian Jews was exemption from the poll tax. The writer of one example of the *Acta Alexandrinorum* has Isidorus arguing that the Jews 'are not of the same nature as the Alexandrians', and suggesting that they are rather 'on the same level as those who pay the poll tax' (i.e. the Egyptians). Agrippa refutes this statement by claiming that, although the Egyptians have taxes levied on them, no one has imposed taxes on the Jews.[35] Isidorus' argument is that the Jews were more like Egyptians in terms of culture rather than that they were actually subject to the poll tax. The writers of the *Acta Alexandrinorum* can hardly have failed to mention that the Jews were subject to the poll tax if this really were the case, as it would strengthen the case of the Alexandrian gymnasiarchs. *CPJ* II 151, a petition to an Augustan prefect written by an Alexandrian Jew named Helenus, may confirm this exemption. Helenus complained that he was being forced to pay the poll tax and lists four arguments to support his exemption. His father was 'an Alexandrian' (l. 3). He has had a Greek education (l. 6), presumably as an ephebe (l. 14) at the gymnasium (l. 13). He has always lived in Alexandria and faces the possibility of being deprived of his fatherland if an adverse judgement is given. Finally, he states that he is over sixty years old, and therefore exempt on the grounds of old age.

The significance of the petition is controversial as Helenus' own status is unclear. Helenus initially described himself as an 'Alexandrian', but a scribe later changed this to a more exact definition: 'a Jew from Alexandria'. It is likely that the Alexandrian Jews would have been registered in the same way that Alexandrian Greek citizens were, in order to prevent Jews from the *chora* claiming their privileges. Becoming a member of the Alexandrian

[32] Joseph. *AJ* 14.117; Philo *Flacc*. 74. [33] *BGU* IV 1151 ll. 7–8.
[34] Philo *Flacc*. 78–9. [35] *CPJ* II 156c ii.8–10.

Jewish community would presumably require both parents to have been registered as members of the community; it could be the case that his father had married a Jew from the *chora*, meaning that, despite his residence in Alexandria, Helenus did not enjoy the privileges of the Alexandrian Jews. Alternatively, Helenus may well have been a fully registered Alexandrian Jew who was being unfairly pestered by an overzealous official. We could compare, for example, the plight of those veteran soldiers who frequently complained that their rights and privileges were being breached.[36]

Another privilege of the Jewish community may have been the potential to acquire Roman citizenship. Pliny reveals that Egyptians needed to gain Alexandrian citizenship before they could be made Roman citizens.[37] It does not automatically follow that the Alexandrian Jews needed to acquire the Alexandrian citizenship as a prerequisite to Roman citizenship. The status of the Alexandrian Jews was higher than that of the Egyptians, and it is likely that emperors could award the Roman citizenship to Alexandrian Jews who were not Alexandrian citizens. Some Alexandrian Jews, such as Philo's brother Alexander, did become Roman citizens.[38] Another possible example is the arabarch ('customs officer') Demetrius.[39]

The community of Alexandrian Jews therefore enjoyed significant privileges, which were guaranteed and upheld by the emperors. This status became a major factor in the Graeco-Jewish violence of the first century AD. The Alexandrian Greeks resented the fact that the Jews had acquired their privileged status through betraying the city to the Romans on at least two occasions in the first century BC. They also were aggrieved that the Jews were allowed a council (*gerousia*) to administer their affairs, while Augustus denied the Alexandrian Greeks the right to convene a *boule*. It would appear that a significant number of Jewish individuals in Alexandria were attempting to improve their current status, as Claudius' letter to the Alexandrians reveals. These Jews were acquiring the Alexandrian citizenship through the ephebate, playing a role in the running of the *polis* and enjoying the Greek athletic festivals in the city, but, significantly, refusing to take part in the civic cults of the city. Hence Apion's objection that the Jews should consider themselves Alexandrian when they do not worship the Alexandrian gods.[40]

Despite the conflict with their religious loyalties, Jews did want to play a role in the running of the cities in which they resided and to enjoy a Greek

[36] See Alston 1995: 60–9. [37] Plin. *Ep*. 10.5–7.
[38] Alexander passed this status on to his descendants; see the genealogical table in Terian 1984: 283.
[39] Joseph. *AJ* 20.147. [40] Joseph. *Ap*. 2.65.

education and attend Greek institutions such as the theatre.[41] There are several examples of Jews holding offices in Alexandria. In AD 101–2, for example, three Jews tended the granaries in the post of *sitologoi*.[42] Philo's loyalty to Jewish customs and traditions can hardly be questioned. Nonetheless, he attended banquets,[43] frequented the theatre, where he heard concerts and watched plays,[44] watched boxing and wrestling matches,[45] and was an ardent fan of the horse races at the Hippodrome.[46] He asserts that Jews took part in the triennial festivals arranged by the city, despite criticising the licentiousness and rivalry that accompanied such festivals.[47] Philo's disapproving remarks on Graeco-Jewish intermarriage would also suggest that this was not uncommon in Alexandria.[48] He criticises those Jews who pursue their education in order to hold office under the rulers, and condemns those who have deserted the Jewish way of life.[49] Nonetheless, Philo also praises those Jews who give their children a Greek gymnasial education.[50] The Jewish petitioner from *CPJ* II 151, Helenus, had a Greek name and had completed a Greek education as an ephebe in the gymnasium. It remains unclear whether Philo ever acquired the Alexandrian citizenship. However, there is little doubt that his social life did not conflict with his Jewish beliefs, and it would seem likely that many Jews in Alexandria would aspire for citizenship to take full advantage of the city's amenities. Citizenship of prominent cities, such as Alexandria, enhanced social status. The apostle Paul, for example, used this status to impress some soldiers, who then allowed him to speak: 'I am a Jew from Tarsus in Cilicia, a citizen of no mean city.'[51]

This situation is confirmed elsewhere in the eastern empire, where Jews held the citizenship of Greek cities and magistracies and enjoyed the Hellenic social life of their cities. In Cyrene several Jewish gymnasial graduates are attested, and a Jew held the office of *nomophylakes*.[52] Jews in the Hellenistic period are also attested competing in gymnasia and enrolling in the *ephebeia*.[53] The Antiochene Jews were firm fans of horse racing. Their adherence to the 'blues' allegedly caused the Graeco-Jewish riots there in AD 38.[54] The literary evidence suggests that the Jews in the empire often viewed and competed in Greek sports festivals.[55] Graeco-Jewish intermarriage was not uncommon. The disciple Timothy was the son of a Greek

[41] Despite the objections voiced in Smallwood 1961: 13–14. [42] *CPJ* II 428.
[43] Philo *L.A.* 3.155–9. [44] Philo *Ebr.* 177; *Prob.* 141. [45] Philo *Prob.* 26.
[46] Philo *Prov.* 2.58. [47] Philo *Agric.* 110–21. [48] Philo *Spec.* 3.29.
[49] Philo *L.A.* 3.167; *Migr.* 89–93. [50] Philo *Spec.* 2.229–30; *Prov.* 2.44–6.
[51] Acts 21:39–40. [52] *CJZC* 6, 7c, 8. [53] E.g. *2 Macc.* 4.7–14.
[54] Malalas *CSHB* 31: p. 244–5. [55] E.g. Harris 1976: 29–50.

father and a Jewish-Christian mother.[56] Greeks in the east were not unwilling to admit Jews to their gymnasium. Even in Alexandria, Jews could not have enrolled in the ephebate without the approval of the Greek magistrates responsible for supervising entry.

What inflamed the situation in Alexandria was the fact that the status and position of the Alexandrian Jews was ultimately dependent on the goodwill of the Roman emperor. In the first century AD the Alexandrian Greeks witnessed Jewish expulsions from Rome, Gaius' attempt to desecrate the Jewish Temple, the brutal crushing of a revolt in Judea, the destruction of the Jewish Temple, and the imposition of the Jewish tax.[57] This, not unnaturally, suggested to them that the imperial authorities could be persuaded to remove the privileges of the Jews and downgrade them to the status of 'Egyptians'. Their attempt to do this under Gaius might well have succeeded, and in AD 66 Nero sided with the Greeks of Caesarea against their Jewish neighbours 'annulling the grant of equal civic rights to the Jews' there.[58] The Alexandrian Greeks enjoyed some limited successes. As I argued in chapter 2, Claudius' ruling in AD 41 barred the Jews from attempting to enhance their status. The Romans sided with the Alexandrian Greeks in the Graeco-Jewish rioting in AD 66 and again in the Jewish Revolt of 115–17. However, ultimately the attempts of the Alexandrian Greeks to preserve the exclusivity of their citizenship failed. Between AD 198 and 211 Severus and Caracalla passed a law (or perhaps even ratified a pre-existing one) which allowed Jews to hold municipal offices without imposing obligations that affected their *superstitio*.[59] This should have stopped Alexandrian legal objections to Jewish citizens, and may even have implicitly allowed the Alexandrian Jews citizenship. With the *Constitutio Antoniniana* all Jews in the empire became Roman citizens anyway. These last two imperial measures brought the issue of the status and rights of the Alexandrian Jews to light once more, and may be a factor in the popularity of the *Acta Alexandrinorum* literature in the Severan period.[60]

[56] Acts 16: 1–3.
[57] E.g. Jews were expelled from Rome under Tiberius (Suet. *Tib*. 36), Claudius closed down synagogues (Dio 60.6.6–7); on the Jewish tax see Alon 1984: 64–70.
[58] Joseph. *AJ* 20.183. [59] *Digest* 50.2.3.3. [60] See pp. 130–40.

APPENDIX III

The 'dubious or unidentified' fragments

For the sake of completeness, I append the following survey of the *dubia vel incerta*, fragmentary texts which either may belong to the *Acta Alexandrinorum* literature because they use the same ideas, terminology and format found in other examples of the literature, or do belong but provide no dramatic context. The *dubia vel incerta* add little to our knowledge of the literature, but are further evidence for how widespread and popular this literature was in Roman Egypt.[1]

1. *P.Aberd.* 117 is a small scrap (2 × 2.8, 6.7 × 2.9 cm) from the Fayum and is written in a hand of the early first century AD. It mentions a 'war', using the term *polemos*, which is used elsewhere in the literature to describe the violence between Greeks and Jews in Alexandria.[2] The accusative plural 'you' suggests direct speech, and that the text may have taken the form of a dialogue.

2. *Acta* XX, a small fragment (4.8 × 4.5 cm) from the late second–early third century AD, uses terminology found in examples of the *Acta Alexandrinorum* literature. It mentions the 'emperor and lord' (l. 3) and 'the emperors' (*sebastoi*), perhaps a reference to a policy followed by previous emperors or an indication that this text reports events from a joint reign. The characters Hime[rus(?)] (l. 2) and Archias (l. 5) are not known elsewhere in the literature but may be Jewish and Greek ambassadors. An Alexandrian teacher from the first century AD named Archias, who taught Epaphroditus, is mentioned by the Suda.[3]

3. *BGU* II 588 is a small fragment (7 × 8.5 cm) written in the late second century AD from the Fayum. The text refers to a group of people, perhaps the Alexandrian Greeks, who are 'destroying themselves' (l. 3) and who have

[1] Musurillo published eleven such texts as *Acta* XII–XXII (Musurillo 1961: 56–72). Two of these original *dubia vel incerta*, *SB* VI 9213 and *Acta* XXII, are discussed elsewhere in the book, pp. 77, 80–2.

[2] E.g. *polemos* is used in this way in *BKT* IX 115 i.7; *CPJ* II 153 l. 74, 158 vi.16; *P.Giss.Lit.* 4.7 iii.31–2; *P.Oxy.* XXII 2339 i.8–9.

[3] Suda s.v. Epaphroditus.

angered the 'king of the Romans' (l. 10) by their conduct (l. 7).[4] This king has treated them with charity rather than justice (l. 8), but will do so no longer unless the Alexandrians stop abusing him (l. 9). While this could belong in the context of a trial scene before an emperor, it may belong to an unknown *Oration to Alexandria*. Dio Chrysostom, for example, says similar things.[5]

4. *P.Bour.* 7, a small fragment (13.5 × 10 cm) written in the late second century AD, concerns a hearing in the imperial court, but the dramatic context is not clear. One section refers to an embassy sent to an emperor and a decision:

To have sent an embassy to the emperor ([*seba*]|*ston*), ([*?*]*rou*) | having judged . . .[6]

The references to 'privileges and benefits' (ii.4),[7] and to someone having judged a case 'showing that the number of those [?] from the race of the Greeks alone . . .' (ii.8–10), suggest that the issue under discussion is the status of the Alexandrian Greeks. 'The Egyptians' are also mentioned (ii.1), who are used elsewhere in the literature during arguments between Greek and Jewish ambassadors to epitomise an inferior legal and cultural status.[8] One participant, Rubrius, is named (i.4). This Rubrius may be present as a member of the imperial *consilium* and may be one of the four Rubrii known from other sources. Rubrius Barbarus was a Prefect of Egypt (13–12 BC). An *eques* named Rubrius was tried under Tiberius.[9] Two Rubrii Galli, possibly a father and son, were suffect consuls under Nero and Trajan.

5. Only a tiny scrap (2.9 × 1.9 cm) of *CPJ* III 456 remains, preserving five lines from the middle of a column. The vocative 'Lord' and the word 'Jews' could belong in the context of a piece of the *Acta Alexandrinorum* literature. The presence of the Jews would suggest a pre-Hadrianic dramatic setting.

6. *P.Erl.* 16 records a trial scene which takes place in Alexandria, hence the reference to the nekropolis, a suburb in Alexandria used for the burial of the dead (i.2). The text was copied onto the recto of a papyrus in the

[4] The emperor is referred to as *basileus* in the *Acta Alexandrinorum* literature; e.g. *CPJ* II 156d l. 15, 159b ii.6.

[5] Dio Chrys. *Or.* 32.69–71, 32.95–6.

[6] *P.Bour.* 7 ii.5–7; Körte 1927: 265 suggests that an embassy was sent to an emperor, which is more plausible than Musurillo's suggestion that one was sent to a first-century AD prefect, Modestus, who is only attested in a passage from the Suda (Suda s.v. Epaphroditus); on 'Modestus' see Cairns 1999: 218–22. The text may well refer to [Caesa]r ([Καισά]ρου) having made a decision rather than the emperor having judged Isidorus ([Ἰσιδώ]ρου), as Körte also suggested.

[7] The same phrase is used in Claudius' letter to the Alexandrians – *CPJ* II 153 l. 55.

[8] E.g. Isidorus insults the Jews by suggesting that they hold the same status as the Egyptians in *CPJ* II 156c ii.8–10.

[9] Tac. *Ann.* 1.73.

second century AD and a literary work was later copied onto the verso. An emperor may be mentioned, if Musurillo's restoration of i.19 ([δι̣δ]όναι τι ὁ Κ[ύριος) is correct.[10]

7. *P.Fay.* 217, from the Fayum, is a small fragment (9.7 × 8.5 cm) from the late second century AD. The nature of the text is unclear but it refers to characters who feature in the *Acta Alexandrinorum* literature: the elders who are said to be demanding something (i.3) and a kind emperor (i.8) who is said to be 'coming' (i.5). There is also a reference to death, rhetorically expressed as 'the end of life'. Other references to 'neighbours', 'entrances and exits' and a slow enquiry led Musurillo to speculate that the fragment concerned 'the illegal profit made on Alexandrian shipping by Roman officials'.[11] The imminent arrival of an emperor could imply that the story is set during an imperial visit to Alexandria.

8. *P.Harr.* II 173 is a small fragment (6 × 18 cm) written in the first half of the third century AD. The *editio princeps* considered the text to be either an historical narrative or a transcript of judicial proceedings. Due to the similarity in language with Dio Chrysostom and the Alexander Romance it was once considered to be part of a novel.[12] The terminology also has affinities with the *Acta Alexandrinorum* literature, and the use of first-person verbs could suggest dialogue presented in direct speech. The text mentions an inquiry (i.4, cf. *P.Fay.* 217 i.4), a foul slanderer or a destroyer (λωβήτηρ) who defends someone (i.5–7), and the 'more educated' (i.10). Hellenism and Alexand[ria] are mentioned in quick succession (i.11–2). There are further references to prostration (i.13), sovereignty (i.14), and someone who is a 'Greek by birth'. These could belong in the context of a trial scene of Alexandrians. The praise of Greek culture and the insistence on Greek heritage are found frequently in the *Acta Alexandrinorum* literature.[13]

9. *P.Med.* inv. 275 preserves eight incomplete lines from the middle of a column, which contain references to the usual cast of an *Acta Alexandrinorum* story: the emperor (i.8), the 'Romans' (i.1), the 'magistrates of the Alexandrians' (i.2) and the 'accuser' (i.5). The only other story to mention an 'accuser' is *P.Giss.Lit.* 4.7, and this text may be a version of the same trial scene. Too little else remains to speculate on the text's dramatic context.

10. *P.Oslo* III 178, a small (6.6 × 8.5 cm) second-century AD fragment, mentions an emperor ([*k*]*yrios*) and Alexand[ria] (i.3 and ii.2), which could belong in the context of an *Acta Alexandrinorum* story. However, the text yields little else.

[10] Musurillo 1954: 73.
[11] Musurillo 1954: 223.
[12] Morgan 1998: 3386.
[13] E.g. *CPJ* II 156b ii.8–9.

11. *P.Oxy.* VI 683, a small text (9.3 × 4.4 cm) from the late second century AD, refers to an emperor (*kyrios*), citizenship (*politeia*), an 'embassy' (*presbeu*[-]) and a certain Dionysi[us]. The text could therefore concern the series of events from AD 38–41, when an ambassador of this name attempted to preserve the exclusivity of Alexandrian citizenship.

12. *P.Ryl.* 437 (10.8 × 6 cm), written in the first century AD, preserves ten lines from the middle of a column. It concerns a trial (cf. i.5, *krisis*). There are mentions of someone deriving profit, people 'doing wrong' and something that is 'unprofitable'. There is also a reference to someone coming 'to the ship'. The blank line in i.2 could be due to the name of a speaker being inserted at the beginning of the line, recalling the layout of *CPJ* II 156c and *P.Schub.* 42. The allegations are consistent with accusations made against Roman officials, and this text could belong to that series of stories.[14]

13. Musurillo suggested that *SB* XIV 11915, a small fragment (5.5 × 5.5 cm) written in the early second century AD, referred to the violence in Alexandria in the Hadrianic period.[15] However, the text has since been revised with new readings that would suggest that it is part of a petition.[16]

[14] See pp. 73–9. [15] Musurillo 1963–4: 16–9; 1964: 147–9. [16] Parássoglou 1976: 56–8.

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